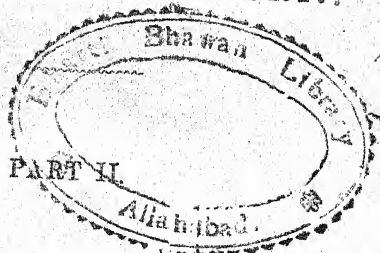


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BRIEF SURVEY OF HISTORY. 900/56



FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE AGE  
OF CHARLEMAGNE.

COMPILED

FOR THE USE OF YOUTHS IN INDIA.

BY

JOHN C. MARSHMAN.

FOURTH EDITION.

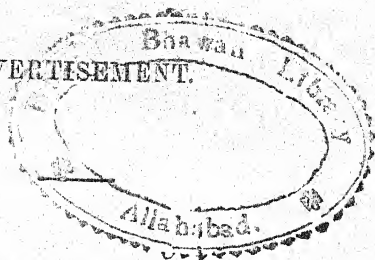
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THE Compiler has found it necessary so far to deviate from the arrangement of epochs laid down in the first Chapter of the First Part, as to divide the era which begins with the Dissolution of the Roman Empire, and closes with the Discovery of America, into two periods, the first of which terminates at the Age of Charlemagne.

He had at first intended, at the suggestion of several friends, to have appended to each page the authorities from which the facts were drawn; but as this would have disfigured the work with a multiplicity of notes, he has thought it would be deemed sufficiently satisfactory for him to state generally the sources on which he has depended for the information now given. He would, therefore, remark that the works which have been carefully read, and which form the ground-work of this Brief View of History are the following :—

Suetonius's *Lives of the Cæsars*—Heeren's *Manual of Ancient History*—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*—Russel's *Modern Europe*—Outline of History in Lardner's *Cyclopædia*—Europe during the Middle Ages, vols. I. and II., and the History of Spain and Portugal in that Miscellany—Palgrave's *History of England*, (Anglo Saxon Period)—Koch's *History of the Revolutions in Europe*—Tytler's *Universal History*—Mills's *History of Muhammedanism*—Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*—The *History of the Church of Christ*, published by the Religious Tract Society—Waddington's *History of the Church*, and Stebbing's *History of the Christian Church*.

# CONTENTS.

## CHAP. VII.

EPOCH FIFTH:—FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE  
DISSOLUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

### SECT. 1. *Page.*

State of the World. The Roman Empire. Its Limits. Its Character. Its Grandeur. Birth of Christ. Doctrines of Christianity. Augustus Cæsar. Tiberius. Caligula. Claudius. Nero. Persecution of the Christians. Galba, Otho and Vitellus. Vespasian. Titus, Domitian. Second Persecution of the Christian, ... .. 1

### SECT. 2.

The good Emperors. Nerva. Trajan; his Ambition; his Persecution of the Christians. Adrian Antoninus Pius. Marcus Aurelius; his bitter Persecution of the Christians, .. ... 32

### SECT. 3.

Commodus. Pertinax. Sale of the Empire to Didius. Septimus Severus. Caracalla and Geta. Macrinus. Heliogabalus. Alexander Severus. Rise of the Sassanian Dynasty in Persia. Maximin. Papienus and Balbinus. Gordian. Philip; his secular Games. Decius. Gallus. Valerian. Gallienus. Cladius. Aurelian. Tacitus. Probus. Carus. Carinus and Numerian, ... .. 38

### SECT. 4.

Diocletian and Maximian. Constantinus and Galerius. Change in the Policy of the Emperors. Oriental Ceremonies. The Celebration of the Last Triumph. Abdication of Diocletian. Intestine Divisions. The Persecution of the Christians by Diocletian and Galerius. Establishment of Christianity by Constantine. Its Effects. Erection of

Constantinople. Changes in the Polity of the Church. The Council of Nice. Death of Constantine, ... ..	67
--	----

## SECT. 5.

Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. Julian. His Persian expedition, and hatred of Christianity. Jovian, Valentinian and Valens. Irruption of the Goths. Gratian. Theodosius the Great. Valentinian the Second. Final Division of the Empire. State of Christianity in the Fourth Century, ... ..	85
--	----

## CHAP. VIII.

EPOCH SIXTH :—FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE DEATH OF CHARLEMAGNE.

## SECT. 1.

Unity of the Roman Empire broken. The Western Empire. Provinces allotted to the Western and Eastern Empire. Honorius. Stilicho. Irruption of the Goths under Alaric. Flight of Honorius. Battle of Pollentia. Defeat of Alaric. Ravenna made the Capital. Irruption of the Alans, the Suevi and Burgundians. Their Defeat. Stilicho murdered by Honorius. Alaric invades Italy and besieges Rome three times. Sack of Rome by the Goths. Progress of the Goths, the Burgundians and Suevi. State of Gaul; of Britain. Death of Honorius. Valentinian the III. Ætius and Boniface. Genseric invades and conquers Africa. Re-appearance of the Huns under Attila. He pours down on Gaul. Battle of Chalons. Defeat of the Huns. Foundation of Venice. Attila marches against Rome. His Retreat and Death. Valentinian murders Stilicho. Genseric plunders Rome. The last nine Emperors. Augustulus. Extinction of the Empire by Odoacer, ... 100

## SECT. 2.

Odoacer. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth subdues Italy; his early history. Emigration of his tribe;

his virtues. Character of the Goths. Boethius. Amalasontha. Theodatus. Invasion of England by the Picts and Scots; and by the Saxons. Hengist and Horsa. Establishment of the Heptarchy. Conversion of the Saxons to Christianity. The Bretwaldas. Union of the Seven Kingdoms under Egbert, King of Wessex. Clovis, first King of the Franks; he embraces Christianity. Division of the country among his sons. Vices of the Kings of the Merovingian Dynasty. Pepin Heristel. Charles Martel. The Gothic Kingdom of Spain. Adolphus. Wallia. Euric. Wamba. Theodoric, the last of the Goths. The invasion of Spain by the Mahomedans, ... .. 125

## SECT. 3.

The Eastern Empire. Arcadius. Theodosius the Second. Pulcheria. Marcian. Justinian. Belisarius conquers Africa. He lands in Italy and takes Rome. Rome is besieged by the Goths. The Franks invade Italy. Belisarius subverts the Gothic Kingdom of Italy. Belisarius is recalled and sent into Persia. Totila, the Goth reconquers Italy. Belisarius is sent to Italy and recalled. Narses defeats Totila. Death of Belisarius. The Code of Justinian. Introduction of Silk into Europe. Death of Justinian. Narses invites the Lombards into Italy. State of Rome. Chosroes and Heraclian, ... .. 144

## SECT. 4.

Contrast between the Invasion of the Northern Nations and the Moosulmans. Birth and early History of Mahomed. He gives himself out as a Prophet. Chief Doctrines of the Mahomedan Creed. Persecution and flight of Mahomed to Medina. Progress of his Religion. His Death. Succession of Abu-beker. Conquest of Syria. Appointment of Omar as Caliph. Conquest of Jerusalem. Conquest of Persia. Conquest of Egypt. Attempt to conquer Africa. Alexandrian Library. Othman. Ali. Contest between him



and Moawiyah. Murder of Ali. Establishment of the Omniade Dynasty. The Shiites and Sunnites. Murder of Hossein. The two sieges of Constantinople. Subjugation of Africa. Tarik and Musa conquer Spain. Death of Roderick. Attempt of the Mahomedans to conquer Europe. Battle of Poitiers. Defeat of the Mahomedans. The extent of their Empire. The Abassides. Revolt of Spain, ... .. 165

## SECT. 5.

History of Italy from the days of Narses. The Lombard Kingdom. Its extent. Alboin; his Misfortunes. Misfortunes of his Successors. Lieutprand. Disputes regarding the breaking of Images. Charles Martel succours the Pope. Pepin de-thrones the King of France; founds the Second or Carolingian Dynasty. Crosses the Alps. Defeats the Lombards. Bestows the Exarchate on the See of Rome. Charlemagne succeeds to the Empire, ... .. 193

## SECT. 6.

Literary and Ecclesiastical Notices from the fifth to the eighth century. State of Literature in the West. In the East. Progress of Christianity among the Barbarians; in Ireland; France; England, and Saxony. Spirit of Persecution. Ceremonies. Pomp of Christian worship. The true Cross. The Sacrament of the Eucharist. Purgatory. Confession of Sin. St. Eligius's Summary of Christian Doctrine. Saints. Councils. The seven Ecumenical Councils. Origin, progress and reform of Monachism. The Clergy and Laity. Progress of the See of Rome towards power, ... 200



## BRIEF SURVEY OF HISTORY.

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### CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1—410.

EPOCH FIFTH :—FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

#### SECT. I.

*State of the World—the Roman Empire—its Limits—its Character—its Grandeur—Birth of Christ—Doctrines of Christianity—Augustus—Cæsar—Tiberius—Caligula—Claudius—Nero—Persecution of the Christians—Galba, Otho, and Vitellus—Vespasian—Titus, Domitian—Second Persecution of the Christians.*

THE First Part of this Brief Survey of History began with the creation of the world ; we begin the Second Part at the era when Christianity was revealed to the family of man. This, the most important event in the annals of time, affords the most appropriate division of the two great periods of history.

Before we proceed to detail the succession of events in the past eighteen centuries, it appears de-

PART II.

A

sirable briefly to sketch the condition of the various states of the world at this epoch. At the advent of Jesus Christ, the kingdoms of *Asia* west of the Indus, whose rise and fall formed the prominent events in the history of the ancient world, had sunk into insignificance, and were absorbed in the great empire of Rome. Parthia alone retained its independence, partly because it was remote and scarcely accessible, and partly because the Romans were satiated with conquest. The mighty states of India and China to the east of the Indus, were then but partially known, and their history was not sufficiently separated from mythology to claim a place in authentic records. Of *Africa*, all that was known to the ancients was comprehended within the limits of the Roman empire; the rest of that continent, from the Great Desert to the Cape of Good Hope, was a blank to the Romans: and indeed it continued so to the more civilized part of the human family, till within about three hundred and fifty years of the present time, when its coasts began to be visited by enterprising navigators. *America* was then undiscovered. In *Europe*, all the country from the Danube and the Rhine to its southern shores, belonged to Rome; the region lying to the north of those two streams was subject to a variety of rude and hardy tribes, the ancestors of the modern nations of the European continent. The Roman empire, in fact, filled the civilized world. Rome was the metropolis of the nations; and the orders which issued from it, were obeyed equally on

the banks of the Thames and the Euphrates, the Danube and the Nile.

The rise, progress, and decline of the Roman empire, from the most magnificent series of political events in history. It was not like other empires, created by the genius of a single hero ; neither did it crumble to pieces when deprived of the talents of a few leading characters ; but the Roman people, patricians as well as plebeians, advanced steadily to the conquest of the world, and never paused in their career, till the emperor Augustus, about the period when the Christian dispensation was introduced, declared that there was nothing beyond the boundaries of the empire worth the labour of subduing, and advised his successors not to attempt any new conquests. And though Trajan, a hundred years afterwards, added several provinces to the empire, his successor Adrian relinquished them, and contracted the empire within its ancient limits ; which were, on the west the Atlantic ocean ; the Rhine and the Danube on the north ; the Euphrates on the East ; and the deserts of Africa on the South. In one instance only, did the Romans after the time of Augustus permanently deviate from his advice ; namely, in the conquest of Britain, which was the work of an after age.

Within the limits of the Roman empire were comprised in *Europe*, Spain, Portugal, Gaul, Italy, Vindelicia, Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Mœsia, Illyricum, Thrace, Macedon and Greece. In *Asia*, the provinces possessed by the Romans were all till

lately embraced within the circle of the Turkish empire, and stretched from the Ægean sea to the Euphrates, and included Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine. In Africa, the Romans possessed Egypt, and that long strip of land between the Mediterranean sea and the Desert, which extended from the confines of Egypt to the Atlantic ocean, about fifteen hundred miles long, but in some places only a hundred in breadth. This was the country so renowned as the seat of the Carthaginian empire, the rival of Rome, although it is now degraded to the dust by the piratical Moosulman chiefs who reign there. The whole extent of the Mediterranean sea, its coasts and islands, were included within the empire : which was three thousand miles in length and two thousand in breadth, and contained sixteen hundred thousand square miles of land, for the most part fertile and well cultivated. Of this immense empire, Rome was the capital and the centre, and was incessantly filled with persons drawn to it from all parts of the world, by business, or commerce, or curiosity. The number of inhabitants who acknowledged the authority of Rome, has been computed by one of the ablest historians, at one hundred and twenty millions, of whom, however, nearly one-half were slaves. The revenues have with equal diligence been computed at between fifteen and twenty millions sterling, a sum far short of that which Hindoosthan alone now yields to the British Government.

Among the causes which contributed to preserve

the Roman authority over an empire of such magnitude, was the valour and discipline of its troops. The strength of the army has been estimated at three hundred and seventy thousand men. These troops were judiciously encamped on the banks of the great streams, and on other parts of the frontiers, to check the inroads of the barbarians. It is worthy of incidental remark, that, while twelve thousand troops were deemed sufficient to guard each of the great kingdoms of Egypt, Africa, and Spain, no fewer than thirty-six thousand were required to ensure the peace of Britain after it had been conquered. The Roman fleet, however, bore no proportion to the army. One small squadron was stationed at Ravenna on the eastern, and another at Micenum near Naples, on the western coast of Italy, which were the two principal naval stations in the empire. To account for the insignificance of the fleet, it must be borne in mind, that the Romans in the days of the Republic had acted on the policy of rooting out the naval power of every conquered state, and that a distaste for the sea, and ships, and commerce, was one of the most distinct features in the national character of Rome.

Nothing was omitted, which wisdom and policy could suggest, to consolidate the empire. It was the great object of the senate to blend the interest of the conquered with that of the conquerors; and hence the privileges of the citizens of Rome were gradually extended to the provincials, who

were admitted to the various offices of Government, till, in the lapse of one hundred years after Augustus, the highest honours in the empire were conferred on Trajan, by birth a Spaniard. But it was perhaps the colonies which the Romans planted, and the steady efforts they made to diffuse their own language, which formed the chief elements of the strength of the empire. Wherever, says one of the ancient writers, the Roman conquers, he inhabits. No sooner had the Romans subdued a district or a province, than they sent a numerous colony of their own citizens to people it. These colonies, spreading step by step over the empire, transplanted the language and civilization of Rome to its distant provinces. It was moreover the policy of the Romans to extend the use of their own language with the progress of their arms; the Roman was, therefore, throughout their empire, made the exclusive language of all the civil and military affairs of Government. The result of this system was, that, in a few centuries, this language entirely superseded the indigenous tongues, throughout the half civilized European provinces of the empire, and was extensively used in the Asiatic provinces. It must however be observed, that though the Romans made greater efforts than have been made by any people to impose their language on the conquered, and continued those efforts steadily through many centuries, they were never able to eradicate any written language, which was in possession of



a literature of its own, (if, perhaps, we except the Punic.) Hence it was found, that at the close of four hundred years, the Greek and the Syriac languages were as extensively written and spoken as ever.

The cities with which the empire was crowded, were so great in number as almost to exceed belief. Asia Minor contained no less than five hundred populous cities; ancient Italy, eleven hundred and ninety-seven; and Gaul, more than twelve hundred. So eager were the Romans to inhabit the countries they had subdued by their arms, that, in the narrow region in Judea beyond Jordan, within a hundred years after the country had been conquered by Pompey, ten magnificent cities were built by the Roman colonists; from which circumstance, the province was called Decapolis. What a contrast does this noble policy present to that of the British Government in India, where, after so long a possession, only *three* cities owe their growth to our rule? Rome, the capital of the empire, was adorned with the most stupendous edifices, theatres, temples, triumphal arches, baths, and aqueducts, constructed of the most costly and enduring materials. Nor were the provincial cities backward in following the example of the capital; even private citizens vied with the emperors, in the erection of these monuments of taste and utility. Fresh water was conveyed by means of aqueducts, to a distance of twenty and thirty miles, over rivers and mountains, for the benefit of towns even of secondary

importance. In fact, the magnificent buildings which arose in the most remote cities of the empire, among nations who, but two centuries before, were naked savages, would not obtain belief, if their gigantic remains did not, after more than sixteen centuries, still attest their existence. All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by means of highways, such as for magnitude and durability, the world has not seen since the fall of the Roman empire. Branching from Rome; they penetrated to the extremities of the empire; so that this great chain of roads extended from the north-western to the south-eastern limit of the state, the amazing distance of more than four thousand Roman miles. Thus a rapid communication was kept up with the provinces, and the spirit of revolt was nipped in the bud. Indeed the Romans considered no country as completely subdued, until they had free access to all its divisions by the construction of such roads: and they wisely judged, that the various provinces of their broad empire could not be kept together for any length of time, without facilities for rapid communication with its most distant sections.

By these plans of profound policy, gradually matured by the wisdom of ages; by the incessant planting of new colonies; by the exclusive employment of the Roman tongue as the language of the state; by the establishment of unrivalled means of communication; by imparting to the conquered arts, and literature; by elevating them to the same level

with themselves, and then throwing open to them all the offices of Government, did the Romans build up an empire, more extensive and more lasting than any which the world has seen. The conquered states were bound to their masters, by a community of interest, in so firm a bond, that they soon relinquished the hope, and lost the desire of separation. The peace of these vast territories was preserved with a standing army, smaller than those which many of the states of Europe, formerly but provinces of the Roman empire, at present keep up, for the security of their narrow domains. So decisive indeed was the result of this wise and liberal plan of government, that, during the three hundred years which elapsed between the period when the empire was in its prime under Augustus, and had begun to decay under Constantine, no province was ever separated from it, although the majority of the emperors who filled the throne, were imbecile tyrants.

While the various nations which we have mentioned above, were reposing in peace under the protection of Rome, it pleased the Deity to take mortal flesh, to atone for the sins of men, and raise the human race from its fallen condition. Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem in Judea, of Mary the espoused wife of Joseph, of the regal house of David, and was laid in a manger in the thirtieth year of the reign of Augustus. Herod, the King of Judea, having sought his life, his reputed father fled with him into Egypt, but returned when the storm had

blown over. At the age of thirty, our Saviour began to instruct men in the true service of God, and travelled through Palestine, declaring himself to be the expected Messiah, attesting his divine mission by stupendous miracles, and doing good to all. At the end of three years he was put to death by the Jews, according to his own foreknowledge and will, and by the vicarious sacrifice of himself, offered up a propitiation for the sins of men, full, perfect, and sufficient. On the third day he arose from the dead : and having given his disciples a commission to preach the Gospel to all people, he afterwards ascended to heaven in the presence of a large assembly. The doctrines which he taught men to believe, and which from the fundamental truths of Christianity were, that man had universally fallen from innocence ; that Christ had come to atone by his own death for human transgression, and to reconcile man to God ; and that cordial repentance, and an efficacious faith in his atonement, were the means of salvation. He taught men that they could never rightly perform their duty to their fellow-creatures, while they neglected their duty to God. He required them not to relinquish the world, but to live in it, and serve God, and benefit each other. He did not inculcate the extinction of the passions, but ordained that they should be duly regulated, and employed as the means of happiness, in the fear of God. He taught that this was a state of probation ; that death would be succeeded by the final judg-

ment, when the eternal destiny of every man would be fixed according to the deeds done in the body; that the prospects of eternity far outweighed in importance the concerns of time; and that every undue attention to secular, which led to the neglect of eternal affairs, was sin and folly. He enforced all the charities and sympathies by which men are united in the various relations of life, and inculcated the spirit of meekness in opposition to that spirit of pride and revenge, which prevails by nature in men. Such was the benevolent character of his doctrines, that it only required the universal adoption of them, to ensure the peace of society throughout the world; and whenever, in the course of this history, we shall have occasion to narrate the strife and wickedness of men and nations professing Christianity, it must be borne in mind that these vices arose out of a departure from the spirit of their faith, and not from their conformity to it. After the ascension of Christ, his disciples, endowed with the Holy Spirit, and gifted with the power of working miracles, went about proclaiming, first in Judea, and then among the Gentiles, the fact of Christ's death, atonement, and resurrection, and inviting men to believe in his name. Their success was great. The Christian faith spread with rapidity from town to town, from country to country, gathering strength from every obstacle, and taking deeper root from every successive persecution; till, in the course of three centuries, the majority of the in-



habitants in the Roman world having embraced Christianity, Constantine the emperor, to strengthen his throne, forsook the decayed religion of the heathen gods and established the faith of Christ as the religion of the state. We turn now to the History of Rome.

Thirty years before the Christian era, Octavius Cæsar, having conquered Antony at the battle of Actium, became the most powerful citizen in the Roman world. With the example of Sylla and Cæsar before him, it is natural to suppose that he aspired to retain the supreme power in his own hands; but he could not forget that Cæsar, after having subdued all his enemies, was cut off by his friends and dependants, who could not brook a superior. Octavius, therefore, determined to pursue a more subtle line of policy, gradually to root out the love of freedom, and to accustom the Romans by degrees to the despotism of one man. The senate, when they saw him without a rival, at the head of a victorious army, very naturally overwhelmed him with honours, and invested him with the powers which had been heretofore divided among the several chief magistrates of the state. He pretended great moderation of views, and declared that he would accept the supreme power only for ten years; but he never forgot to secure the renewal of this gift, at the expiration of the term. The senate continued at first to exercise its ancient functions; but they were taken away one by one, till nothing was left of all its former



dignity but the shadow of a name, and the power of hearing appeals from inferior courts. Having thus attained the supreme power in the commonwealth, Octavius assumed the name of Augustus Cæsar, and divided the various provinces of the empire between himself and the Senate, allotting to them the more peaceful districts, and reserving for himself those on the frontiers which required the presence of the armies; it was by this artifice, that he retained the army in his own hands. The province of Egypt, though fully subdued, he kept to himself, inasmuch as it was the granary from which Rome was supplied with provisions, and gave him in fact the command of Italy. A division was also made of the public revenues, a portion of which was made over to the senate, while the greater part was assigned to Augustus. With this command of the finances, the legions, and the fruitful province of Egypt, he became necessarily master of the empire.

But though possessed of unlimited power, Augustus prudently avoided all display; for the bulk of mankind are more inflamed to jealousy by the open shew of greatness than by the unobtrusive possession of absolute power. He kept no court, and retained no cabinet of ministers, but lived in a circle of obsequious friends, with whom he sometimes consulted on matters of state, and at other times indulged in the enjoyments of literature and philosophy. While silently and craftily rivetting the chains of the Romans, he mixed freely with

the people, took his seat in the senate as an equal, and pretended to derive all his power from the suffrages of his fellow citizens. Yet however deep the disgust which his cold hearted tyranny inspires, it must be confessed that the empire prospered under his sway. After having been torn with the contentions of rival chiefs, and deluged with blood for half a century, the world required peace. That peace was experienced in the reign of Augustus, but it was purchased at the expense of freedom. Augustus spared no pains to reconcile the Romans, once so fierce for liberty and equality, to the sovereignty of one man. He filled the metropolis with the most exquisite and magnificent buildings, constructed works of the highest public utility, encouraged the arts, and fostered literature, till the Roman language attained a degree of purity which made it almost rival the Greek. By these various devices, he secured a reputation which has survived the fall of the Roman empire; and every subsequent period, which has been distinguished for taste in literature and the arts, has been denominated an *Augustan* age. Thus were the Romans brought to forget their ancient liberty, and to acquiesce in despotism.

The political events of Augustus's reign were trifling, when compared with those of the stirring period which preceded it. The northern part of Spain and western Gaul were subdued. An expedition against the Parthians was projected, but not executed; another against Armenia produced no

results. The most important conquests were those made of the regions lying south of the Danube, and which were formed into the following provinces: Rhætia, Vindelicia, Noricum, the two Pannonias, and the two Mœsias. These provinces were acquired with little exertion; but the attempt to subjugate Germany cost many lives, and finally proved unsuccessful. Three irruptions were successively made into the country by Drusus, who in his last expedition penetrated as far north as the Elbe, but met with his death on his return. During the eighteen years which succeeded that event, five Roman generals one after the other endeavoured to secure the country by the policy usual with the Romans, of erecting fortresses, constructing roads and bridges, and introducing the Roman tongue; but in the year A. D. 9, Varus with all his legions was annihilated in one decisive engagement near Paderborn; an event which so deeply affected Augustus, that he is said to have often exclaimed in his dreams, "Varus, restore me my legions." By this defeat, Germany was preserved from the yoke of the Romans, and the German language saved from extinction. Several attempts were subsequently made to retrieve the honour of the Roman armies in this quarter, but without success; and the succeeding emperors, after several vain efforts, left the Germans and the northern nations of Europe to the enjoyment of their own wild freedom. It was the swarming of this northern hive, which three centuries after overspread

and broke into fragments the Roman empire. One other public act of Augustus appears to require mention. He established a body of troops for the security of his own person, a thing unknown in the days of the republic. They were called the Pretorian Guards; and lest the novelty of the thing should awaken the jealousy of the Romans, they were kept at a distance from Rome, and billeted on the provinces of Italy. We shall have occasion subsequently to shew how these troops were, by succeeding tyrants, encamped within the walls of the city, and acquired such power as to make and unmake emperors at their pleasure.

Augustus, fortunate in his public career, was unhappy only in his own family. He had no male offspring. His only daughter Julia, who was married to Tiberius, he was obliged to banish from Rome for her licentiousness. Tiberius was the son, by a former husband, of Augustus's wife Livia, who so filled the imperial circle with her intrigues to secure his succession, that Augustus became weary of existence. He expired at Nola, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, having governed Rome, without a rival or coadjutor, forty-seven years. After his death, he was deified by the senate, and priests were appointed to sacrifice to him as to a god; and though this procedure justly appears blasphemous in this enlightened age, yet when it is considered that the great majority of the Grecian and Roman deities were men, before they became gods, it will cease to surprize us.

It might have been expected, that, on the death of Augustus, the Romans would have attempted to restore the republican form of Government; but that prince had so effectually rooted out the ancient spirit of freedom by his crafty policy, that Tiberius his son-in-law stepped with ease into the vacant throne. At his accession, he was fifty-six years of age, and he reigned twenty-two years. Though he concealed his vices during the reign of Augustus, and also during the first years of his own government, yet his brutal character began gradually to appear, and he became at length the greatest monster on historical record. His natural disposition first displayed itself in his conduct to his kinsman Germanicus, the next in succession to the throne according to the will of Augustus, the darling of the people, and one of the most able and virtuous characters of that age. Germanicus had commanded with great success in Germany, and recovered the standards lost in the defeat of Varus. He was removed from his post by Tiberius, through motives of envy, and sent to the East, where his success was equally brilliant. The hatred of Tiberius increased with the renown acquired by Germanicus, till being able no longer to restrain the fury of his passions, he employed Piso to take off the hero by poison. Piso was arraigned for the crime at Rome, and was obliged to evade justice by suicide. While Germanicus lived, Tiberius appeared to act under some kind of restraint; but no sooner was he removed out of



the way, than the tyrant gave aloose to his passions, and then for the first time did the Romans taste the cup of imperial despotism, which under his successors they were obliged to drain to the dregs. A new crime, that of treason against the emperor, was brought forward, and charged against those whom Tiberius was anxious to remove, and an odious body of spies was let loose upon society. To add to the miseries of the state, he appointed Sejanus, a monster of lewdness and cruelty like himself, to the post of prime minister. By his sinister advice, Tiberius retired from Rome (to which he never returned) into Campania, and finally took up his abode in the lovely island of Capræ, opposite Naples. Sejanus, thus left master in Rome, introduced the pretorian guards, to the number of 10,000, into the city, and encamped them permanently within the walls; by which contrivance he was enabled to overawe the citizens, and to indulge in his vices with impunity. No man's life was secure; every look, every word, the possession of wealth, or of a beautiful female relative, became a crime, and was visited with death. The noblest families in Rome, the descendants of those illustrious men who had built up the commonwealth, were rooted out. Meanwhile Tiberius gave himself up to the unbounded indulgence of his passions in his retreat at Capræ. Every species of debauch which the most impure imagination can conceive, was practised without one feeling of shame. The emperor passed his time in directing



the execution of the innocent, and in inventing new modes of stimulating his lascivious appetites, rendered languid by age. Human language wants terms adequately to depict the enormities which the hoary-headed Tiberius practised in this island for ten years. Sejanus his favourite, after having long filled Rome with dismay, at length aspired to the throne, by the death of Tiberius; but his master anticipated his purposes, and put him and all his friends to death. The provinces, as may well be supposed, under such rule, speedily became a scene of disorder; which the unsparing rapacity of the emperor's lieutenants, and the irruption of the barbarians, served grievously to augment. At length, the faculties of Tiberius being exhausted by excess he died in the 37th year of the Christian era, and bequeathed the government of the Roman world to a monster, whose atrocities have cast even those of Tiberius into the shade.

It was in the eighteenth year of the reign of Tiberius that Jesus Christ was crucified, and "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven. Tiberius is said to have proposed to the Senate to receive our Saviour among the Roman deities, but that body, servile in all other matters, resisted his will in this instance only.

Caligula, the son of the virtuous Germanicus, was twenty-five years old at the time of his elevation to the supreme power, and during the first eight months of his reign governed with so much

equity, as to induce the brightest hopes of a happy reign. But it was not long before he threw off the mask, and, appearing in his true character, became the most abandoned of mankind. The honour of no lady in Rome was secure; even his own sisters did not escape the pollution of his embraces. The two thousand seven hundred million of sesterces, equal to about eighteen crores of Rupees, which Tiberius had scraped together, he squandered with the wildest profusion in one year, and then proceeded to put to death whoever was suspected of being wealthy. He decreed divine honours to himself; he set up his own image in Rome; and such was the degeneracy of the age, that the greatest citizens were proud to act as his priests. Sometimes he gave himself out as a male, sometimes as a female, deity. He determined at length to raise his horse to the consulship, but was prevented by the death of the beast. His cruelty is sufficiently manifested in that memorable speech of his, that he wished all Rome had but one neck, that he might strike it off with a single blow. After a reign of four years, his own attendants formed a conspiracy and assassinated him, A. D. 41.

As soon as his death became known, the senate endeavoured to resume those rights, of which the ascendancy of the Caesar family had deprived them for seventy years, and to re-establish themselves at the head of the republic. They assembled together, and during forty-eight hours acted as

an independent body; but it might have been easily foreseen, that the base sycophants of Tiberius and Caligula, were not the men to rebuild the fabric of Roman freedom. Another body, moreover, had grown up to power in Rome, during the reign of those tyrants, and began now to make itself felt. We allude to the pretorian soldiers, the emperor's body guard, who had, as we have noticed above, been placed in permanent barracks in the city. While the senate was deliberating, they proceeded to action, and proclaimed Claudius, the uncle of Caligula, emperor; and the senate was obliged to ratify this choice, and to shrink back into its former insignificance. Claudius was the first emperor who set the dangerous example of giving a donative to the pretorians. He was fifty when he attained the throne. He was rather weak than wicked; yet by the contrivance of those who governed him, there were put to death, during his reign, which lasted thirteen years, thirty-five senators and three hundred knights. He was governed by Pallas and Narcissus, his freedmen, and by his two wives Messalina and Agrippina, women of the most abandoned character, who by their avarice and cruelty rendered his reign odious to mankind. His expedition into Britain is the most memorable of his exploits. Though he remained there but sixteen days, and did nothing, yet his visit stimulated his generals to subjugate the island. Claudius was at length poisoned by his wife Agrippina, to make room for her son Nero.

Nero ascended the throne without opposition at the age of seventeen, and governed the empire for five years with exemplary justice. He had for his preceptor Seneca, the wisest philosopher of that age, whose instructions appeared at first to have produced some salutary effect on the mind of his pupil. So mild indeed was Nero at the beginning, that being obliged to sign the death warrant of a culprit, he regretted that he had ever learned to write. But these fair promises were soon blighted, and the latter part of his reign, during eight years, presented such a scene of folly, lust, and cruelty, that his very name has descended to us as a comprehensive term for all that is detestable in a tyrant. He put to death his mother, his wife, his preceptor, and the most virtuous men in the state, and wandering through the provinces with an army of buffoons and actors appeared himself on the boards of the various theatres. He lavished incredible sums on his lewd companions, and in building his Golden House, which is said to have been of unparalleled splendor. On the other hand, he set the city of Rome on fire, and coolly looking on the blaze from the roof of his palace, amused himself with playing on a fiddle. A volume would scarcely suffice to detail his enormities. Historians have been accustomed to attribute his atrocities and those of Caligula to insanity ;—it was the insanity of unrestrained power. The world at length grew weary of the tyrant ; revolts broke out in almost all the provinces, and the wretched man,

abandoned by all but a servant, and one of his own sex, whom, in the august presence of the senate, he had married, fled from Rome and put a period to his life, in a miserable hovel, in the thirtieth year of his age, A. D. 68.

While the family of Cæsar was thus filling Rome, the mistress of the world, with indiscriminate slaughter, and the vilest pollution, the Gospel of eternal truth was silently making its way through the empire. The apostles of Christ, after having been endowed with the Holy Spirit, set themselves vigorously to the work of evangelizing mankind. A persecution which broke out in Judea, constrained them to seek for other fields of labour; and within a few years the seeds of divine truth were sown in the most civilized provinces, and the most renowned cities of the empire. The progress of the gospel in that early age was remarkably assisted by the unparalleled facilities for travelling which the Roman roads afforded, and by the union of so many nations, formerly independent, under one Government. In addition to the apostles formed under the immediate eye of our Saviour, Saul, afterwards called Paul, was changed by the power of divine grace from a bitter persecutor into a bold and zealous advocate of the Christian faith. Through his labours, and those of the other apostles, the truths of Christianity, according to the general voice of antiquity, were carried before the first general persecution, into Scythia, Greece, Italy, Egypt, Asia



Minor, Parthia, India, Armenia, Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Ethiopia. Through all these countries, the messengers of the truth were allowed to travel, notwithstanding the arbitrary conduct of the emperors.

But in the year 64, a change came over the prospects of the Christian converts, and they were subjected to the first of those severe persecutions, with which their virtue and constancy were tried for two hundred and fifty years, and over which they achieved a glorious triumph. In the year 63, the profligate emperor, Nero, as noticed above, set Rome on fire, and in order to avert the odium of the deed from himself, cast the blame upon the Christians, who were objects of hatred to the Romans. It will naturally appear singular that men who, like the Christians, professed and practised a purer and more benevolent system of morals than the heathen world had ever known, who conscientiously refrained from mingling in the political feuds of the day, and who made piety to God and good will to men, even to enemies, the two main principles of their conduct, should have become the objects of abhorrence. To understand this anomaly, the reader must bear in mind, that at this period morals had reached perhaps the lowest possible depth of infamy. Rome, the metropolis of the civilized world, the common sewer to a hundred millions of people, contained within its walls, and in the immediate vicinity, a population of nearly six millions, a greater num-

ber of human beings than had ever been congregated before within a circle of equal dimensions. In this vast population, all the vilest passions of human nature were in full operation without any check; the emperor and the senate, who alone had power to control the general corruption, as being at the head of the state, led the way to the most infamous debaucheries. Every moral principle by which society is kept from preying on itself, appears to have been suspended; whatever was impious in the sight of God, or polluted in the sight of man, was openly practised in almost every palace in Rome. No one can read Suetonius without feeling convinced that this period presents the blackest page in the history of human morals. In this general pollution, one small body of men stood forth who reproved the vices of the age by their exemplary conduct, and who, in the precincts of the imperial place, in the very presence of Nero, remained steadfast in the paths of virtue. Such exemplary conduct, must become the object either of imitation or of hatred; and the hatred of vice to virtue is always in proportion to the greatness of the contrast. The Christians became objects of abhorrence, and were charged with being unsocial, and the common enemies of the human race, because they refused to mingle in the orgies of the period. Nero dexterously took advantage of this popular excitement, and accused the Christians of having set fire to Rome, well knowing that the charge would be greedily believed and

acted on. The tortures which he inflicted on them, are such as human nature revolts from. He caused these innocent victims to be covered with wax or similar substances, and placing them in conspicuous parts of the imperial gardens, set them on fire that they might serve as torches. Some were crucified; and others were sown up in the skins of wild beasts, and then exposed to be worried by dogs for the amusement of spectators. His cruelties at length reached such a pitch, that those who hated the Christians and loved inhuman games, expressed disgust at his barbarity. The persecution, however, was continued for three or four years, and was stopped only by his death.

By the death of Nero, the line of Caesar became extinct. As no one could claim the throne of the Roman world by inheritance; various competitors started up, each one supported by the troops under his command; and, in the short space of two years, four individuals obtained the imperial purple. *Galba*, an old general of seventy-two, was proclaimed emperor by the legions in Spain, and obtained the sanction of the senate, which was now an empty ceremony. He had not resided at Rome more than four months, when he was assassinated by his friend *Otho*; who, having gained over the troops, was advanced to the throne. He had been the dissolute companion of Nero, but gave promise of a vigorous reign. The legions in Germany, however, claimed the privilege of creating an emperor, and advanced their general *Vitellius* to the throne. *Otho* march-

ed against them, but was defeated, and put himself to death. *Vitellius* then proceeded in triumph to Rome ; but his cruelties and debauchery soon made the Romans weary of him. His predominant vice was gluttony, and in the short space of seven months, he consumed a sum equal to six crores of Rupees in the expenses of his table ; which acquired him, and not without justice, the appellation of 'beast.' Before he had been a twelvemonth on the throne, the troops in Syria proclaimed *Vespasian*, their leader, emperor; and *Vitellius* was ignominiously put to death.

In these various contentions, the public treasury was completely exhausted, and the state thrown into great disorder; and had there not been some remains of the old Roman spirit in the commanders of provinces, the empire would probably have fallen to pieces. The accession of the wise *Vespasian* was a happy event. He was at the time of mature age, being fifty-nine years old, and had raised himself honourably through the various ranks of the public service. He applied with zeal to the task of healing the disorders, and reforming the manners of the state. He expelled from the senate all who had rendered themselves infamous, and restored to that body the privileges it had enjoyed in the days of *Augustus*. He revised the system of taxation, and added some new imposts ; a measure which, though forced on him by the prodigality of his predecessors, created no little discontent. Nor was he altogether free from

the suspicion of loving money ; but it must be borne in mind that, considering the character of the times, this was a far more excusable vice than the opposite extreme of prodigality, which his predecessors had practised. The enlarged resources which he thus acquired, were employed in encouraging popular education, in supporting school-masters, and in adorning Rome with the noblest buildings. Can the man who began the Colloiseum be charged with parsimony ?

It was during his reign that Jerusalem was taken and demolished, and the Jewish power extinguished. This infatuated nation, as if bent on their own destruction, had determined to brave the whole weight of the Roman power, hoping for assistance from Almighty God, whom they had outraged by their impieties. The city of Jerusalem besieged by Titus, the son of the emperor, suffered infinitely more from the discord and violence of its defenders, than from the weapons of the enemy. The citizens under different leaders, attacked and murdered each other with relentless fury. As the siege proceeded, famine began to make its appearance among them, with its inevitable attendant, pestilence. Those who escaped the sword of the factions within, and of the Romans without, fell into the jaws of famine ; in fact, the miseries which this city experienced before its fall, have no parallel in history. It appeared, as the Jewish historian remarks, as if God and man had united to inflict the direst vengeance upon this devoted peo-



ple. During the siege the august Temple, the glory of the city, was burnt down, and then for the first time did the deluded inhabitants begin to despair of relief from the God of their forefathers. Titus soon after made himself master of the city, and that no remembrance might remain of the horrors perpetrated during the siege, razed it to the ground, and caused the plough to pass over it, thus fulfilling the prophécy of our Saviour, that not one stone should be left standing upon another. The number of those who perished during the siege has been accurately computed at a million; the few who survived were dispersed through the provinces of the Roman empire. They still subsist as a distinct people among the various nations of the earth though eighteen hundred years have elapsed since their expulsion from Judea; and they still cling to the hope of returning to it, at some future period.

After a happy reign of nine years, Vespasian died, and left the empire to his son Titus; then forty-one years of age. He is represented as the model of every virtue, and was usually styled the delight of mankind. His brief reign was remarkable for calamities; a conflagration broke out at Rome, and was followed by a pestilence of unusual violence. An eruption of Mount Vesuvius buried beneath its burning lava the cities of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabea, with all their inhabitants. These cities have been discovered within the last hundred years, and the ashes cleared away; and the modern traveller walks

through the palaces and theatres, the temples and the houses, as they stood in the days of Titus, and misses nothing but a living population. These calamities were, in the opinion of the Romans in some measure counterbalanced by the successes of Agricola in Britain, who in ten campaigns conquered the whole country, with the exception of the wild mountaineers of Scotland, built a range of fortresses from the eastern to the western shore, to restrain their irruptions, and sailing round the island, first ascertained its insular form. The Colloseum at Rome which had been begun by Vespasian, was completed by Titus, who, as if conscious of his approaching end, night and day urged the completion of it on the workmen by his own presence. This building was destined for shews of gladiators, men guilty of no crime, but brought from the various parts of the empire to murder each other as a holiday shew for the noble Romans, women as well as men. Alas, for the consistency of human virtue, when Titus, the beloved of mankind, who, on remembering one evening that he had done no act of goodness, exclaimed, I have lost a day, should have eagerly urged on in person the completion of a building, in which he knew that thousands of his innocent fellow-creatures would be wantonly butchered.

After a reign of three years, Titus was succeeded by his brother Domitian, a second Nero, A. D. 81. He began his reign however with moderation, but gradually degenerated into a tyrant, and

displayed in his conduct all the base passions of human nature, rage and jealousy, cowardice and cruelty, without a single redeeming virtue. To support his tyranny, he attached the troops to him by augmenting their pay one-fourth, and provided for this extravagant expenditure by confiscations. But while those who lived in the immediate circle of the court, groaned under his cruelty, the provinces were comparatively tranquil, owing to the severe discipline which he maintained over the governors. His most important war was that with the Dacians, a German tribe, who pressed the Roman legions so closely, that Domitian was obliged to purchase peace by an annual payment of money. This was the beginning of that fatal system of concessions to the barbarians, which at length brought them with irresistible force on the provinces of the empire. In the days of Roman glory, the barbarians on the north of the Rhine and the Danube had been kept at bay by the valour of the soldiers. In this degenerate age, Domitian by offering them money as the price of their forbearance, at once revealed the weakness of the empire, and taught them their own strength. Domitian was the second emperor, who persecuted the Christians, rather however from a silly fear of their being dangerous to his throne, than from the brutality of his disposition. Among those who perished during this persecution were men of the first distinction in Rome, the cousin of the emperor, with his two sons, whom he had destined to be his successors.

## SECT. 2.

*The good Emperors—Nerva—Trajan ; his Ambition ; his Persecution of the Christians—Adrian—Antonius Pius—Marcus Aurelius ; his bitter Persecution of the Christians.*

With the exception of the interval of the reign of Vespasian and Titus, the Romans had now foreigthy years, been subject to a succession of infamous tyrants ; but the death of Domitian was the commencement of a happier era, which extended through an equal length of time. The Senate, on hearing that he had been assassinated, immediately elevated Nerva, an aged and most virtuous senator, to the throne. He was then seventy-years of age, too old, and too benevolent to rule an empire, in which the bonds of discipline had been so long relaxed. He reduced some of the burdensome imposts of Vespasian, and endeavoured to stimulate industry ; but the most useful act of his reign was the adoption of Trajan as his successor, who on the death of Nerva, after a reign of little more than a year, ascended the throne, A. D. 98, and reigned twenty years.

Trajan was by birth a Spaniard, and the first individual, not an Italian, who sat upon the throne of the Cæsars. He was a prince of such exalted virtue, that two hundred and fifty years after his death, the senate, congratulating one of the emperors, wished he might be more fortunate than Augustus, and more virtuous than Trajan. He abolished all those laws which his vicious predecessors had made

the instruments of their cruelty. He restored to the Romans as much liberty as, in their fallen state, they were able to enjoy. He sought out and rewarded merit, placed the ablest men he could find over the provinces of the empire, and seemed to make it the sole aim of his administration to benefit the hundred millions who were subject to his sway. Frugal in his own expenses, he laid out the public funds with judgment and freedom, forming roads, founding schools, and adorning the empire with useful and splendid buildings. Two fatal errors are however visible in his conduct,—his unbounded ambition, and his persecution of the Christians. Contrary to the wise maxims of Augustus, he engaged in distant and fruitless expeditions beyond the Danube and the Euphrates, and sought to enlarge the boundaries of the empire. Over the Danube he built a magnificent bridge, of which some small remains still awaken the remembrance of his name on that celebrated stream. The German nations he subdued with vigour; but it was when he had crossed the Euphrates, and found himself in the East, in the track of Alexander the Great, that he seemed to catch the spirit of that conqueror. He carried his victorious arms through Mesopotamia and Parthia, into regions which the Roman troops had never trodden. Fitting out a fleet in the ports of Persia, he also sailed down the Persian gulf, and is said to have penetrated as far as India. On his return from this expedition, he passed his time in settling the countries he had



conquered, and finally prepared to enter Rome in a more magnificent triumph than had ever been witnessed. But he lived not to return to the capital; he died in Cilicia on his way to Italy. His body was brought to Rome and received by the weeping senate and citizens, and entombed beneath the lofty column, an hundred and forty feet high, which he had raised to commemorate his victories. His image was placed on its summit, to be displaced in the revolutions of a future age, by the image of one of the chief apostles of that faith which he had so bitterly persecuted.

His persecution of the Christians, not because they were insubordinate or immoral, but because they would not bow down to his gods, admits of no excuse. The two preceding persecutions under Nero and Domitian, we ascribe to the individual character of those monsters; but when we see the virtuous Trajan, the pride of antiquity, condemning with his own voice to be torn by wild beasts, men who, in the opinion of his own enlightened friend Pliny, were exemplary in performing all the duties of life, on the simple ground that they worshipped God according to their own consciences,—to what are we to refer the phenomenon, but to the spirit of paganism; which, tolerating every species of foreign superstition, however corrupt, reserved its vengeance for the faithful disciples of that religion which was distinguished for the unsullied purity of its moral code?

Trajan was succeeded by his cousin Adrian, who reigned more than twenty years. He differed from his predecessor, in preferring the studies of peace to the glory of conquest ; hence he restored to their sovereigns those countries which Trajan had subjected to the empire, and thus reduced it within its former boundaries. He retained Dacia, however, under the idea that it was necessary to the maintenance of peace on the German frontier ; but he broke down the bridge on the Danube. He then applied himself to the reform of abuses, and traversed every province of the empire, examining into the state of affairs with his own eyes, and distributing rewards and punishments on the spot. The vigour which he manifested was such as had not been witnessed since the days of Cæsar. He was one of the most accomplished scholars of the age ; he encouraged the fine arts, and raised monuments in and about Rome, of which many remain to this day. During the early part of his reign, the edicts of his predecessor not having been repealed, the Christians were severely persecuted ; but on the receipt of an Apology for the Christian faith from two of its most enlightened champions, he put a stop to the persecution. A letter which he received from the Proconsul in Asia, who reasoned with him on the monstrous injustice of allowing the Christians to be worried to death so wantonly by the pagans, added strength to his tolerating spirit ; and during the last fourteen years of his reign, they enjoyed peace.

Adrian after a long and prosperous reign, adopted Antonius Pius, to whom the high honour is due, of having been perhaps the most perfect character in ancient or modern times who ever adorned a throne. Of his reign, which lasted twenty years, the highest praise is, that it was so tranquil as to afford scarcely any materials for history. His private life was blameless; his administration was just; his expenditure on public objects liberal; he engaged in no war, but the influence which, through his justice, he acquired over foreign sovereigns, was so great as to induce them frequently to appoint him arbitrator of their differences. He was too just to persecute the Christians;—others may have refrained from annoying them from clemency, or contempt, or indifference; he protected them on the sound principles of religious freedom.

He was succeeded by Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher, as he is termed by way of distinction, a man worthy in many respects to succeed Antoninus, with whom he may sustain a fair comparison. He would have trodden in the peaceful steps of his predecessor, but the barbarians on the frontiers of the empire, who had not experienced the edge of Roman valour for more than forty years, began to repeat their incursions. Marcus Aurelius, with the true valour of a soldier, passed nine years on the frontier in repelling their aggressions; but, though eminently successful, he determined to purchase future tranquillity by settling the barbarians with-

in the boundaries of the empire. If the first step in the downfall of the empire was Domitian's purchasing the forbearance of the barbarians with money, the establishment of them within the limits of the empire by Marcus, was a second and more fatal step. Among other actions which have stained the reputation of Marcus's reign, was the sack of Selucia, a Macedonian colony on the western bank of the Tigris, forty-five miles from Babylon. The Roman generals arrived before this city in their progress against the Parthians, and were received as friends and guests, as the inhabitants of Selucia had always been in a state of hostility with the Parthians. But they perfidiously entered and sacked the city, and put three hundred thousand of the inhabitants to the sword in cold blood.

To the indelible disgrace of Marcus Aurelius, he rekindled the flames of persecution, and subjected the Christians to the most cruel tortures. For his conduct the excuse cannot be pleaded, that he was ignorant of their tenets. He was assuredly better acquainted with the benevolent character and tendency of Christianity than any of his predecessors had been; for he had examined the question with the eye of a philosopher. Yet the professors of the Christian faith suffered equally from the most brutal and the most enlightened of emperors;—from Domitian and from Marcus. After the fires of persecution had blazed for many years through the various provinces of the empire, especially at Lyons and Vienna in France, they

were slackened, if not extinguished, by Marcus Aurelius, in consequence, as historians affirm, of a miraculous deliverance in one of his expeditions, which was attributed to the prayers of a Christian corps in his army. He was succeeded by his son Commodus, in every respect the reverse of his father, in the year A. D. 180.

### SECT. 3.

*Commodus—Pertinax—Sale of the Empire to Didius—Septimius Severus—Caracalla and Geta—Macrinus—Heliogabalus—Alexander Severus—Rise of the Sasanian Dynasty in Persia—Maximin—Pupienus and Balbinus—Gordian—Philip ; his secular Games—Decius—Gallus—Valerian—Gallienus—Claudius—Aurelian—Tacitus—Probus—Caraus—Carinus—and Numerian.*

The Roman world had now been blessed for eighty years with a succession of virtuous princes in Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius. If it be asked, at what period in human annals, the largest number of human beings have been rendered happy by their rulers, we must point to the period just reviewed. But from the accession of Commodus, the miseries of mankind recommenced, and the empire hastened to its close with a quickening pace. Yet it will appear a striking proof of the wonderful vigour of the Roman policy, that it continued to subsist for two hundred years longer, notwithstanding the vices of its rulers, and the power of its enemies. In Commodus, the basest of mankind succeeded to the throne of the most virtuous. The son of



Marcus had received the best education ; but the effect both of precept and example was destroyed in his mind, by his being associated with his father in the imperial dignity at the early age of fourteen. When raised to the sole possession of the empire, he proved a monster of vice. It derogates not a little from the character of Marcus Aurelius that he bequeathed the empire to a man of such abandoned habits, instead of following the footsteps of his predecessors, and placing the most worthy on the throne. Commodus was in the camp beyond the Danube, at the time of his father's decease. Anxious to enjoy the luxury of the capital, he purchased peace of the barbarians, and hastened to Rome, where he abandoned himself to every species of debauchery, and disgraced the Roman purple, by fighting in the amphitheatre with wild beasts. Elephants, panthers, lions, and ostriches were brought, at an incredible expense, from the most distant parts of the empire, that he might obtain the glory of putting them to death. He even condescended to fight as a gladiator, an occupation which was held in the deepest contempt even by the most degenerate Romans. The cares of state were abandoned to his minions, who by bribery and extortion amassed almost incredible sums of money. A conspiracy was at length formed against him in his own palace, and his favourite concubine presented to him a cup of poison. His reign extended to thirteen years ; and the only redeeming

feature in it, was the freedom from persecution granted to the Christians.

Commodus having thus been put to death, the conspirators raised to the throne the virtuous Pertinax, then sixty-seven years of age, a man who had passed with honour through various public offices, and who determined, among other reforms, to curb the licentiousness of the pretorian guards. But they had been accustomed during the reign of Commodus to such unbounded indulgence, that the idea of reform filled them with dismay. They formed a conspiracy against the emperor, and entering his palace at noon-day, put him to death, and fixing his head on a pole, paraded it through the streets. He reigned but three months.

The pretorian guards now determined to put up the empire to sale. This act of surpassing insolence was perpetrated by a body of men, compared with whom, the citizens were in number as thirty to one: but the citizens were indolent and divided, the guards overbearing and united. They had long been pampered, not only by the vicious, but also by the virtuous emperors. Indeed, one of the most serious charges against the Antonines, is, that when in the zenith of their power, instead of ridding the state of these turbulent troops, they flattered them with presents. The sale of the empire was conducted on the ramparts of the pretorian camp; and two wealthy citizens came forward and bid against each other. One of

them, Didius Julianus, having at length raised his offer to two thousand rupees for each soldier, or three crores and twenty lakhs of Rupees for the whole corps, the empire was knocked down to him at that price. But the new emperor found himself upon the throne of the world, without a friend. The guards soon became ashamed of their choice; and the people and senate felt keenly the indignity which had been offered to the majesty of Rome. When the news spread through the empire, the hardy veterans on the frontiers held it foul scorn that the empire of the world should have been so basely disposed of by the effeminate guards of the city, who had never seen the face of an enemy. Albinus, Niger, and Severus, who commanded the legions respectively in Britain, Syria, and Pannonia, determined to make an effort to dethrone Didius, and acquire the empire for themselves. Severus, who commanded the legions in Illyrium, keeping in mind the saying of Augustus, that a Pannonian army might always be in Rome in ten days, hastened into Italy by forced marches. He promised his soldiers an ample do-  
native, and having thus raised their cupidity, gave them no relaxation night and day till they had crossed the Appenines and were in sight of Rome. Didius implored the pretorians to support the man of their choice; but those troops, who had long forgotten the use of arms in the lap of ease, presented but a feeble obstacle to the veterans of the Danube. The wretched emperor, therefore, after

having enjoyed his vain title at the expense of his whole fortune, for sixty-six days, was beheaded as a common criminal ; and Severus ascended the throne, A. D. 193, and reigned seventeen years.

Though Severus had thus obtained the empire, two competitors still remained to be overcome, Albinus and Niger. That he might have but one foe on his hands at one time, he declared Albinus his colleague, lavished every favour on him, and sent emissaries to assassinate him. (Severus was an African.) He came to an engagement with Niger, at Issus, on the same spot where Alexander had defeated the troops of Darius, five hundred years before. On the present, as on the former occasion, the troops of Europe were opposed to those of Asia, and with the same result. Niger with his Asiatic troops was defeated and slain. A rupture with Albinus soon followed ; and Severus defeated him also in a bloody engagement at Lyons in France. His cruelty after these engagements tarnished the lustre of his military fame. It was during the reign of Severus, that the senate, who had hitherto preserved some small remains of their ancient dignity, even under the most despotic monarchs, sunk into complete contempt ; and the throne of the Cæsars became emphatically despotic. Though Severus preserved discipline, he contributed perhaps more than any of his predecessors to the downfall of the empire. The pretorian guards, whose insolence and power had made them

dangerous, he disbanded and banished to the distance of a hundred miles from Rome; but he organized another body guard in their stead, consisting of four times their number. The former guards had been usually enlisted from the various provinces of Italy; but Severus directed that the new guards should be drawn from the valorous legions on the frontiers, the greater part of whom consisted of barbarians, or of their descendants. Thus the youth of Italy lost the use of arms, and sunk still deeper into effeminacy; while a permanent camp was formed in the city of more than fifty thousand brave, but barbarian soldiers, who had no one feeling of sympathy in common with the citizens, and who were ready to obey their leader, whatever might be his orders. By this arrangement, the commander of the pretorian bands became the first man in the empire; for it was about this time also, that the charge of the finances, and the highest functions of the law, came to be entrusted to their prefect. Thus a power arose behind the throne greater than the throne itself.

Severus encouraged a very severe persecution of the Christians, who had now increased both in learning and in numbers. Many of the Bishops of the Christian church were men of eminent talents, well versed in the classic language and the knowledge of the age; and the writings of many of them were distinguished for eloquence. Tertullian, one of the fathers of the Church, describes in the fol-



lowing language their wonderful increase in numbers, notwithstanding the hostility they experienced from all men in power throughout the empire:—

“Were we disposed to act the part, I will not say of secret assassins, but of open enemies, should we want forces and numbers? Are there not multitudes of us in every part of the world? It is true we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your towns, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, counsels, camps, courts, palaces, senate, forum:— We leave you only your temples. If we were to make a general secession from your dominions, you would be astonished at your solitude.”

The intelligence of a war in Britain induced Severus to proceed thither in person, though so ill as to require to be carried in a litter. He took with him his two sons Caracalla and Geta, that he might, if possible, correct the vicious bias of their minds, and remove their mutual hatred of each other. He proceeded to Scotland (Caledonia,) and, though the Caledonians fought with great bravery, eventually subdued them, and built a wall from sea to sea, to prevent their encroachment on the Roman provinces. Soon after, he expired in the city of York at the age of sixty-five, and left the empire jointly to his two sons, A. D. 211. They immediately set out for Rome; but both on their route and after their arrival in the imperial palace, every movement betrayed their implacable hatred of each other. As it appeared impossible to re-

concile them, it was proposed to divide the empire between them; but the Romans were spared this indignity by the barbarity of Caracalla, who, having invited his brother into the presence of their common mother, under pretence of a reconciliation, caused him to be assassinated there. The friends and connections of Geta, to the number of more than twenty thousand, shared the same fate as their master. To these murders succeeded the massacre of the most illustrious citizens of Rome, among whom no one was more deeply regretted than Papinian, the great lawyer, the pretorian prefect, who was put to death because on being commanded to write a panegyric on the murder of Geta, he nobly replied that it was easier to commit than to justify fratricide.

Nero, Domitian, and the other tyrants had confined their tyranny to the metropolis; but Caracalla, a year after the murder of his brother, left Rome, and travelled through the provinces, particularly those in the east, which he laid waste with his cruelties. The cities were compelled to raise at a ruinous expense, baths, palaces, and theatres, which he never deigned to enter. The most wealthy citizens were obliged to squander their riches in furnishing him and his dissolute companions with costly entertainments; and the slightest disobedience was punished with death. From the summit of the temple of Serapis at Alexandria, he coolly witnessed the murder of many thousand innocent citizens, which he himself had

wantonly directed. At length Macrinus, the pretorian prefect, delivered the world from his tyranny, after he had reigned six years. The prefect, though a man of mean lineage, was raised by the voice of the troops to the throne, which he filled only fourteen months.

There was at this time an effeminate youth of elegant manners, the high priest of the temple of the Sun at Emesa, in Syria, whom his mother gave out to be the son of Caracalla. A conspiracy of women and eunuchs was formed to elevate him to the empire; the troops of the province gathered around him and supported his pretensions; and marching to Antioch met and defeated Macrinus in a pitched battle, in which the latter lost his life. The name of this youth was Bassianus, but he is better known by the name of Heliogabalus, which he assumed after that of the god at whose shrine he had served. All the vices of the previous tyrants of Rome appeared to be concentrated in him. During the four years in which he filled the throne, he wallowed in the most infamous debaucheries, and indulged in every excess of cruelty. To what a state of degradation must the nobility and public functionaries of the Roman empire have been reduced, to permit such a monster to pollute the imperial throne for four years, and to fill every post of importance with the lewd companions of his pleasures? The pretorian guards at length put him to death; and his mutilated body was dragged through the streets of Rome.

His cousin and successor Alexander Severus, was as much distinguished for his virtues as the late emperor by his vices. Perhaps he was too mild a spirit for this turbulent age; yet the empire, under his auspices recovered a portion of its power and majesty. His mother, a woman of first rate talent, regulated the administration with vigour, and appointed twenty of the ablest Roman citizens, to act as her son's cabinet council, at the head of whom was Ulpian, the greatest jurist of that age. Under the direction of this board, the most oppressive taxes were repealed, the administration of the finances reformed, and the general happiness of the empire promoted. But the reformation of the army, which had grown in power and insolence amid the licentiousness of the preceding reign, was a task of greater difficulty. This attempt excited a mutiny; and the rebellious pretorians pursued their prefect Ulpian into the emperor's presence, and laid him dead at his feet. This example of insubordination became contagious; the armies on the frontiers broke out into mutiny; their officers were massacred, and the whole period of Severus's reign was passed in struggling against the vices of the age, and the decay of the empire.

The most remarkable event in his reign, is the rise of the Sassanian dynasty in Persia. That country, lying beyond the limit which Augustus had assigned to the Roman empire, had been for several centuries under the government of the Parthian.

kings, between whom and the Romans, hostilities had never ceased since the death of Crasus. Artaxerxes, who had served with distinction in the army of Artaban the king of Parthia, rebelled against him, and in three pitched battles subverted the Parthian monarchy; then calling a large assembly at Balk in Astracan, he procured his being confirmed as king of Persia. He determined to strengthen his new throne with the sanctions of religion, and assembling a synod of no less than eighty thousand priests of the religion of Zoroaster, confined to them the task of reforming that creed, and giving it greater currency among the people. He next directed his attention to the consolidation of his power, and the correction of abuses. As soon as he felt himself firm in his throne, he wrote a haughty letter to the Roman emperor, to inform him that he had now acquired the sceptre of the king of kings, and to demand that all those Asiatic provinces which had been embraced in the empire of Cyrus, eight centuries before, as well as the kingdom of Egypt, should be ceded to him; and that the Romans should content themselves with Europe. Such a message was of course regarded as a declaration of war; and the two monarchs of Persia and Rome prepared to decide the dispute in the field. Of the battles fought between them, the narratives are very uncertain. It appears, however, to be well established, that Severus reaped no laurels, and that Artaxerxes gained no accession of terri-



tory. The Persian monarch survived the war fourteen years, and bequeathed the throne to his son Saper, a youth in every respect worthy of his gallant father. The dynasty of Artaxerxes was called the Sassanian, and kept possession of Persia, till the race of Sefi overran the country; and established the faith of Mahomed.

Alexander Severus was put to death at the early age of thirty-one, by Maximin, a Thracian peasant of extraordinary stature and boldness, who had raised himself by his reckless valour from the lowest condition to that of pretorian prefect. Though he reigned three years, he never condescended to visit Rome or Italy, but kept moving about with his camp between the Rhine and the Danube, warding off the barbarians. He was exceedingly cruel, and considered every man of attainments superior to his own, his adversary, and put him to death without remorse. The Christians felt in a peculiar manner the heavy hand of his vengeance upon them. The Romans groaning beneath the cruelty of this upstart barbarian, burned for revenge. Africa at length set the example. Gordian the procurator, then eighty years of age, a man equally remarkable for his noble birth and his virtues, was solicited to assume the purple. To this he and his son reluctantly consented, and wrote conjointly to the senate to inform them of the event, which they heard with no little joy. That body which had tamely submitted for two hundred years to every indignity,

seemed to be suddenly animated with some portion of their ancient spirit. They assumed the reins of Government, selected the most meritorious of the body, and confided to them the defence of Italy. Deputies were sent about to organize the revolt of the provinces; and the people, having more to hope from resistance than from acquiescence, joined heartily in the cause. The Governor of Mauritania, however, on the first news of the revolt, marched against, defeated, and slew the Gordians. The senate, nothing dismayed at this disaster, immediately chose Pupienus and Balbinus, two of their body, joint emperors, the one to preserve peace in the city, the other to take the field. Meanwhile Maximin, inflamed to madness, crossed the Alps, and entered the plains of Italy; but he found the country silent and desolate. Such had been the orders of the senate, that the tyrant might meet with nothing to aid his progress. He laid siege instantly to Aquileia, which was nobly defended. All his efforts were baffled; and his troops, pining from want, proceeded at length to slay their commander in his own tent, to the inexpressible joy of the whole empire.

In this general joy, the pretorian guards alone refused to participate; for they clearly perceived that, if the election of emperors by the senate, not only without their concurrence, but in spite of them, passed without notice, their power would soon be at an end. Within four months of the death of Maximin, therefore, they entered into a conspi-

tracy; and one day, while the citizens were employed in the public games, rushed into the palace, and dragging the two emperors through the streets of the city, put them to death. Before the senate could assemble for deliberation, the troops proclaimed young Gordian, then nineteen years old, emperor, A. D. 238. His reign was likewise brief; he was fortunate, however, in having for his prime minister, Misethus, a man equally able in the cabinet and in the field. The emperor espoused his daughter, and under his guidance marched to the east against Sapor, (or Shahpoor,) the second king of the new dynasty of Persia, who had invaded Mesopotamia. The Persians retired at his approach. While the virtuous Misethus lived, every thing prospered; but he was soon after carried off by disease. Philip, an Arabian by birth, a freebooter by profession, succeeded him as pretorian prefect, and began to pave his way to the throne. When his plans were ripe, and he had gained over the troops to his interest, he put to death the gentle and unoffending Gordian, on the banks of the Euphrates, and assumed the sceptre of the Roman world by the suffrages of his soldiers.

Philip hastened to Rome, and obtained the sanction of the senate to his elevation. To obliterate the memory of his crimes, Philip, finding that the year of his elevation was the thousand anniversary of the foundation of Rome, celebrated the secular games with a degree of splendour which had scarcely been witnessed before, in all the gorgeous

festivals of former days. The arrival of such a period in the history of a nation, naturally brings up a crowd of reflections. The mind involuntarily reverts to the humble origin of the city, and contrasts the first rude huts raised by Romulus on the banks of the Tiber, with the imperial city in its full maturity, adorned with the most magnificent buildings, the mistress of the western world. The intermediate periods also come up in review; the first four centuries of petty warfare, carried on for existence; then the three centuries of freedom and glory; and lastly, the three centuries of outward splendour but inward corruption and decay. Nor can the mind refrain from the melancholy reflection, that though the empire still stretched from Great Britain to the Euphrates, from Mount Atlas to the Danube, and though Philip might appear as great a monarch as Augustus, yet the decline of the empire was now hastening on with accelerated strides.

The twenty years which succeeded the secular games, were years of disaster beyond all former example. The murder of so many emperors, in so short a space of time, had necessarily weakened all the bonds which connected the subject with the throne; the barbarians, who eventually subverted the empire, began to break through its barriers with greater boldness and success; while, to fill up the measure of public calamities, internal discord and disputes exhausted the strength of the provinces. Philip was killed a twelvemonth after he

had obtained the throne, and was succeeded by Decius ; who had scarcely time to look around him, before he was summoned to repel the Goths from the banks of the Danube. As this is the first mention of the Goths in this compilation, and as they were the chief agents in breaking the Roman sceptre, we pause to glance at their origin.

The Goths issued at a very remote period, from Scandinavia, the modern Sweden, and crossing the Baltic, settled themselves near the mouths of the Vistula, in the provinces now included in Prussia. They were a daring, active, uncivilized race, unacquainted with tillage ; and as their native soil did not continue to yield a sufficiency of food they were constrained to seek it elsewhere. Frequent emigrations took place ; the new colonists pressed on the older emigrants, and obliged them to move onward in search of other abodes. The provinces lying west of Prussia were inhabited by another cluster of tribes called Vandales, who resembled the Goths in habits, manners, and internal economy, and possibly derived their ancestry from a common origin. The two nations, therefore, coalesced without any difficulty. A fresh irruption from Scandinavia, had, some time before the date at which we have arrived, driven the first colony of Goths to the shores of the Euxine, where they took possession of the Ukraine. To the east of them lay the poor Sarmatians, who could afford little or no booty. To the south west stretched the populous country of Dacia, a Roman province ;



which tempted them as much by its smiling and fertile fields, as by its unprotected condition. In the reign of Philip, therefore, they traversed this province, plundered it in every direction, and crossing the Danube laid the neighbouring province of Moesia under contribution, and then retreated to their seats. Soon after, they returned with more considerable forces, and, notwithstanding the vigilance of the emperor Decius, poured down on the northern districts of Macedon, and taking Philippopolis, massacred a hundred thousand of the inhabitants. Decius having got into their rear, spared no pains to prevent their retreat. Finding themselves hemmed in on all sides, they would gladly have purchased safety with the sacrifice of all their plunder: but Decius, over confident of success, forced them into an engagement in which despair added new vigour to their valour. For the first time in two hundred and fifty years the Roman army was completely routed. Decius and his son were left dead on the field. He was a man of strict integrity, great valour, and vast talents; but his character is stained by a merciless persecution of the Christians, for whom he appeared to entertain feelings of personal hate, which were too readily caught and acted on by the subordinate authorities.

The defeat of the Roman army so far humbled the pride of the troops, that they did not venture to create an emperor, but left that honour to the senate, who nominated Gallus. Though a man of

military experience, he was so weak as not only to allow the barbarians to retire with their plunder, but to promise them an annual donative, if they would abstain from their accustomed inroads. He then hastened to the capital and buried himself in sensual enjoyment. The barbarians re-crossed the frontier, but were successfully opposed by Emilianus, whom his troops proclaimed emperor, though not against his will. Gallus was soon after murdered by his own troops, but Emilianus did not enjoy his new dignity more than four months; at the end of which time he was murdered in his turn by the troops; and Valerian, reckoned the most virtuous man in the empire, ascended the throne with universal acclamation, A. D. 253. He was at the time sixty years of age, and reigned seven years. His reign and that of his son were more signally marked with disasters than any preceding period. It was in his time that the Franks and the Allemanni appeared in arms, and began their inroads on the empire.

The Franks were the ancestors of the present French nation, and assumed that name to denote their freedom. They consisted of a confederacy of German tribes, who inhabited the regions of the lower Rhine. Either allured by the hopes of plunder, or urged on by the pressure of other tribes in their rear, they poured down like a torrent upon Gaul; and though Valerian sent his son Gallienus to oppose them, they swept the whole length of France, crossed the Pyrennees, and carried their

ravages into Spain. When they had exhausted that fertile country, to which two centuries of profound peace had given ease and plenty, they seized some vessels and transported themselves into Africa.

Several other German tribes residing beyond the Elbe, had associated together, and assumed the name of *Allemanni*, or *All-men*, to denote the extent of their union, and poured down on the provinces of the empire. This name designates the Germans to this day, among some of the nations of Europe. A large body of them crossed the Danube, and the barrier of the Alps, and, spreading over the plains of Lombardy, carried their ravages to Ravenna, almost within sight of Rome. Valerian was then in the East, Gallienus in Gaul. The senate seeing the fair fields of Italy about to fall a prey to the barbarians, awoke from their wonted lethargy, and, as in the days of Roman glory, took measures for the common safety, raised an army, and so terrified the enemy as to induce them to retreat to Germany. Gallienus hearing that the Capital had been saved by the energy of the senate, considered the danger from any revival of spirit among them, more pressing than that which the barbarians inspired; he therefore passed a law forbidding any senator to approach the camp of the legions; and the senators sunk back without reluctance into their usual luxury.

The Goths, of whom we have spoken, had settled by this time in the Tauric Chersonesus, (now

Crim Tartary.) on the northern shores of the Euxine, and began to acquire a naval force, which enabled them to extend their devastations over a wider field. Sailing from this peninsula, they coasted the eastern shores of the Euxine, the scenes of the Argonautic expedition, and sacked the capital, Trebizond, with the plunder of which they laded their fleet, and returned in triumph. Their second expedition was directed to the western coast. On arriving at the straits which divide Europe from Asia, near the spot where Constantinople now stands, they were attracted by the rich and defenceless city of Nicomedia, which, together with other cities of Bithynia, they plundered, and extended their ravages over the provinces of Asia Minor : but, on the setting in of the rains, they bent their steps homewards. Emboldened by these successful expeditions, they fitted out a larger fleet of 500 sail, and, placing 15,000 of their bravest troops on board, sailed to the Dardannelles, and first destroyed the noble city of Cyzicum ; then boldly venturing into the Grecian seas, to them an unknown navigation, they laid siege to Athens, where meeting with a repulse, they spread over the whole country of Greece, and after having destroyed its noblest cities, marched to the frontiers of Italy. Gallienus was roused from his security, and advanced against the barbarians, whom he effectually checked, and dispersed. Some of their troops he incorporated in the Roman armies ; others broke through Mœsia,

and thus regained their homes; while a third party, taking to their ships, destroyed the far-famed temple of Ephesus, and laid waste the Troad, on their return to Crim Tartary.

While the empire was distracted with these inroads, Valerian, not far from seventy years of age, was engaged with his legions in a war with Sapor, the king of Persia. After passing the Euphrates he encountered the Persians at Edessa, but was totally defeated and taken prisoner. Sapor, with the true spirit of an oriental, treated the fallen monarch with studied indignity. To improve his victory, he advanced to Syria, devastated its plains, sacked its towns, and created a desert wherever he moved. Valerian died in captivity. During the first part of his reign, for three years and a half, he gave every encouragement to the Christians, so that the imperial household was filled with Christian officers. But, during the latter portion, he subjected them to a bitter persecution, which extended through nearly all the provinces, and was stopped only by his death.

His son Gallienus, now left sole emperor, gave himself little thought except about his own enjoyments. During the eight years of his reign, the whole empire was torn with factions. Every province, and every division of the army created an emperor. So numerous indeed were the emperors who thus sprung up in every direction, that they have been called the thirty tyrants. The reader may easily imagine the confusion into



which public affairs were thrown, and the miseries inflicted on the miserable provinces by these conflicts for power. To enter into the details of this unhappy period would occupy too much space. Suffice it then to say, that the greater number of these emperors fell in mutual conflicts; and that Gallienus was assassinated by his own troops while besieging Milan, into which one of his competitors had thrown himself. He atoned in some small measure for his crimes, by naming Claudius to fill the vacant throne.

The rule of anarchy now closes, and we enter on the reign of a succession of princes, beginning with Claudius, whose wisdom and valour stayed for a time the decay of the empire. Under the direction of the valiant Claudius, Milan was taken, and the spurious emperor put to death. At this period, some of the fairest provinces of the empire were in a state of revolt. Tetricus exercised an independent authority in Gaul, Spain, and Britain; and Queen Zenobia did the same in the East. Claudius, during his short reign of two years, had little leisure to attend to those distant affairs. His administration is distinguished by the signal defeat of the Goths, who, with an army of emigrants, men, women, and children, of almost incredible number had descended to Thessalonica. This victory acquired the emperor the name of the Gothic Claudius. He expired at Sirmium after having nominated Aurelian, like himself an Illyrian peasant, his successor.

Aurelian ascended the throne in A. D. 270 ; and though his reign extended only to four years, it was full of important incidents. He brought the war with the Goths to a close, partly by force, partly by negotiation. Aurelian had the sagacity to perceive, that in the distracted state of the empire, it was unwise to retain the distant province of Dacia, which it was so difficult to defend from the incursions of the Goths ; and he had the good sense to determine on relinquishing it, though he thereby incurred the odium of having contracted the sacred limits of the empire. He proceeded therefore to remove all the Roman citizens from it, and then ceded it to the Goths, who having now a fixed habitation, felt an interest in defending it against the inroads of other barbarians. From being active enemies they became cordial friends, and rendered this one of the firmest barriers of the empire.

The Allemanni were not so easily subdued. Forty thousand of their cavalry suddenly appeared in the field, and carried their devastations from the Danube to the Po. As they were returning laden with spoil, Aurelian by forced marches gained the front of their line. The barbarians struck with dismay, humbly sued for peace ; but Aurelian had determined to make an example of them, and sternly refused all terms. Their retreat being thus intercepted, the emperor, secure of success, left his generals to complete the victory, and proceeded elsewhere. Despair however imparted courage to

the barbarians ; they broke up their camp and marched back on Italy ; and Aurelian, while expecting to hear of their destruction, learnt to his astonishment that they had laid waste the fruitful valley of the Po. He hastened back with some veteran legions, and in three engagements exterminated the Allemanni.

Though Italy was thus delivered from all immediate danger, it became too evident that the imperial city of Rome, the name of which had formerly carried terror to the most distant nations, was no longer secure from the barbarians, who were pressing with such vigour on the northern provinces of the empire. Aurelian, therefore, performed the melancholy duty of surrounding it with ramparts, which described a circle of twenty-one miles ; and the necessity of this measure furnished the most convincing evidence that the empire had already seen its brightest days. It may easily be imagined with what feelings of poignant distress, the citizens, whose ancestors had seen no foreign enemy on the soil of Italy since the days of Hannibal, set about the fortifications which were to defend their city, the apparent mistress of the world, from the insolence of the barbarians.

Aurelian now bent his attention to recover the provinces of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, usurped by Tetricus ; and Syria, Egypt, and part of Asia, which obeyed Zenobia. Tetricus, with the promise of a pardon, betrayed his associates ; but his legions, though deserted by their leader, fought a

bloody battle in Champagne, in which they perished almost to a man. The revolted provinces immediately returned to their obedience. But the most memorable event in the reign of Aurelian was the subjugation of Zenobia. She was the most extraordinary woman of that age; nor can Modern History shew any one superior to her. She claimed descent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt; in beauty she rivalled the celebrated Cleopatra; she was enriched in a peculiar degree with all those qualities which serve to maintain, and to adorn a throne. She was not ignorant of the Latin language; but the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian she spoke in perfection. She gave every encouragement to literature, and entertained as her private secretary, the renowned critic Longinus, whose works, written during the decline of Grecian learning, rival the purest models of its brightest era. This accomplished woman had given her hand to Odenatus, who in the confusion of the times, had raised himself to the dominion of the East, chiefly through the aid of her incomparable wisdom and courage. His capital was fixed at Palmyra, in the deserts of Arabia, a city built by Solomon, king of Judea, more than a thousand years before this period, and adorned by Roman colonists with buildings of such singular taste and magnificence, that the remains, which still subsist, attract the highest admiration of the traveller. Odenatus having been cut off by treachery, she assumed the sceptre, and governed Palmyra, Egypt, and Syria, more in the character

of an independent princess, than as a subject of the Roman empire. She adopted the pomp of oriental monarchs, and exacted from her subjects the same homage which had been usually paid to the sovereigns of Persia. She styled herself, Queen of the East, and often shewed her sons, to whom she had given a Latin education, clothed in the imperial purple. Aurelian advanced against Zenobia with a large force, and, notwithstanding the energy she displayed, defeated her troops in two engagements. He then laid siege to her capital, and the queen, seeing no hope of relief, rather than submit to the Romans, mounted the fleetest of her dromedaries and fled to the Euphrates, but was overtaken and made prisoner. The city of Palmyra, on the occasion of a subsequent revolt, was taken and destroyed; and this seat of the arts and of commerce, gradually sunk into a miserable village.

Having thus triumphed over all his foes, foreign and domestic, and restored unity and peace to the empire, Aurelian returned to Rome, and celebrated his conquests by a more splendid triumph than had perhaps ever dazzled the eyes of the citizens. But his most substantial triumph, was the magnanimity with which he treated Zenobia and Tetricus, whom, instead of dragging after his triumphal car, and consigning to a dungeon, he loaded with favors. The latter part of his reign is said to have been stained with cruelty, in revenge for a tumult which broke out in Rome; he crowded the prisons with victims, and put to death many illustrious citizens.

Soon after, he led his troops against the Persians in the East, and was on his route put to death by his own servants.

The army, with unexampled moderation, sent repeatedly to request the senate to appoint a successor to the throne; the senate as frequently referred this task to the army, and eight months passed in this useless exchange of compliments. Meanwhile the barbarians appeared in arms, and the senate at length raised to the throne Tacitus, a senator, then seventy-five years of age, a descendant of the great historian, a man of exemplary virtue, but one whose withered hands were totally unfit to wield the sceptre of such an empire at such a crisis. He marched, notwithstanding, to meet the enemy; but the change of climate from the heats of Campania to the snows of Cacausus, proved too much for his constitution, and he expired after a reign of six months. The army on this created Probus emperor, a man of great virtue and courage, who immediately wrote to request the senate to confirm his choice, to which they readily acceded. He generously shared the administration of the empire with that body, and, in the course of his reign of six years, preserved peace and order throughout the empire. The most memorable service of his reign was the complete deliverance of the province of Gaul from the Germans who, since the days of Aurelian, had incessantly ravaged it. He pursued them beyond the Rhine, and made them feel in their turn those



calamities of war which they had inflicted on the Roman provinces. To prevent the repetition of their incursion, he built a strong wall which extended two hundred miles in length, from the Rhine to the Danube; a step which checked their inroads for a time: but, soon after the death of Probus, the Allimanni threw it down. This wall of Probus, that of the Antonines in Britain, and the great wall of China, abundantly teach us, that it is not stone walls but the valour and spirit of the inhabitants, which form the true defence of any country. One other arrangement of this emperor deserves mention: he matured the plan of enlisting the barbarians in the Roman armies, and of giving them settlements in the provinces of the empire. Italy, now sunk in sloth and effeminacy, could no longer furnish troops to defend the empire. This plan of Probus, therefore, was the dictate of necessity; but as he enlisted none of the barbarians but those whom he had previously subdued, the evil effects of it were not felt till after his reign. These various conflicts on various points of the empire being completed, Probus returned to Rome and celebrated his triumph with great magnificence. But his active spirit could not brook repose; he led his troops into Illyrium, and no enemy being in the field, employed them in draining the marshes of Sirmium, his native town, where he was slain in a mutiny, A. D. 282.

Without waiting for a reference to the senate, the army raised to the throne Carus, the pretorian

prefect, a man every way deserving of that honour. He immediately associated with him in the government, his two sons, Carinus and Numerianus, and, though sixty years of age, marched against the Sarmatians, the ancestors of the Poles, whom he signally defeated. It was then the depth of winter; yet the aged emperor hesitated not to proceed through the snows of Asia Minor to the confines of Persia, where ascending a lofty mountain, like a second Hannibal, he pointed out to his troops the fertile fields for which they were to fight. The Persian monarch sent an envoy to negotiate peace, who found the emperor sitting under a tree, partaking of a frugal repast. Carus cut short the conference, by taking off his cap, which he wore to conceal his baldness, and declaring that if the Persians did not acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, he would soon render their country as bare of trees as his head was destitute of hair. This was no idle threat. He entered Mesopotamia sword in hand, made himself master of the principal cities, and would probably have subverted the throne of the Sassanides, if he had not lost his life, in the midst of his victorious career. Numerian, who was with the army of the East, and Carinus, then in Gaul, were proclaimed joint emperors. The death of Carus, however, changed the face of affairs. The troops, though in the ardour of victory, refused to advance, from a superstitious notion that the Tigris was the boundary of the empire; Numerian was therefore constrained to lead

them back. Carinus proceeding to Rome, gave himself up to the indulgence of his own cruel and extravagant disposition. The only event which has rescued his reign from oblivion is the celebration of games with unprecedented splendour, and with a disregard of expence ill suited to the drooping state of public affairs. Meanwhile Numerian died, and the troops proclaimed Diocletian emperor, who lost no time in preparing to contest the empire with Carinus. The troops of both parties met, A. D. 285, near a small city of Mœsia on the banks of the Danube; but while the battle hung in suspense, an officer whose wife Carinus had dishonoured, plunged a dagger into his bosom and slew him, eighteen months after he had ascended the throne.

## SECT. 4.

*Diocletian and Maximian—Constantius and Galerius—Change in the policy of the Emperors—Oriental Ceremonies—the Celebration of the last Triumph—Abdication of Diocletian—Intestine Divisions—the Persecution of the Christians by Diocletian and Galerius—Establishment of Christianity by Constantine—its Effects—Erection of Constantinople—Changes in the Polity of the Church—the Council of Nice—Death of Constantine.*

Diocletian, who now assumed the sceptre of the Roman world, was a man of more obscure birth than any preceding emperor; yet was his reign il-

lustrious in every respect but one, his persecution of the Christians. He associated with himself in the government of the empire, Maximian, a fellowsoldier, by birth an Illyrian peasant. To him Diocletian resigned the care of the West, and took the East for his own province. The first exploit of Maximian was the subjugation of the peasantry in Gaul, who had long been in a state of rebellion. A revolt had also occurred in Britain, which arose out of a singular circumstance. In the reign of Probus, a band of Franks whom he had established in Pontus, on the shores of the Euxine sea, seized some vessels, passed the Hellespont, traversed the Mediterranean, plundering as they went, and sailing through the straits of Gibraltar, boldly ventured into the ocean and landed in Belgium. Even if they had not been ignorant of the navigation of these seas, this would justly have been ranked among the most daring exploits of that age. The Franks, emboldened by success, continued after this to ravage the Roman provinces adjacent to the sea, and obliged the Romans to construct a navy in that quarter; Boulogne, in France, was fixed on as their port, and Carausius, according to some a Belgian by birth, according to others, the descendant of a British king, was appointed to command it. He gradually conciliated the sailors, and at length sailing over to Britain, proclaimed himself emperor. His fleets rode triumphant in the channel, and Diocletian and his colleague, unable to subdue him,

were constrained to acknowledge his title, which he retained for nine years. It is a fact of no inconsiderable interest, that Britain, destined in the lapse of fifteen hundred years to acquire the command of the ocean, should in this early period have begun to assume her natural importance as a maritime power.

In the sixth year of his reign, Diocletian made a change in the form of government. Perceiving that the empire was assailed in every direction by the most active enemies, and required the presence in various quarters, of those who possessed supreme rather than delegated authority, he conferred on two generals an inferior title, with an equality of power. The two emperors in chief were styled *Augusti*; the assistant emperors, *Cæsars*, Diocletian selected for his Cæsar, Galerius, the son of an obscure herdsman, but a man of spirit and valour. Maximian associated with himself Constantius, the grand nephew of the emperor Claudius. The provinces of the empire were also subjected to a new distribution, to suit this new form of Government. Diocletian reserved to himself Thrace, Egypt, and the rich countries of Asia; Maximian received Italy and Africa. To Constantius were allotted Spain, Gaul, and Britain; three countries which seem by their locality formed for a community of interests. Galerius was intrusted with the turbulent frontier of the Danube. Though this fourfold division of power planted the seeds of future discord, yet as long as the commanding ta-

lents of Diocletian governed the councils of state, it served to protect the empire from the inroads of the barbarians. Constantius, after having employed three years in fitting out a fleet for the recovery of Britain, landed on the island, and defeating the successor of Carausius who had been murdered, annexed it once more to the empire. The barbarians beyond the Danube, were effectually checked by Galerius, who also succeeded in humbling the pride of the Persian monarch Narses. Diocletian on this occasion shewed his policy, by adjusting the boundaries of the Persian and Roman empires, in a manner calculated to secure a lasting peace.

The emperors now seldom visited Rome. Maximian resided at Milan ; Diocletian at Nicomedia ; and the imperial city, thus deserted by the court, naturally fell into a state of debasement. The pretorian guards of Rome, who had so often made and dethroned emperors, were gradually disbanded, and their duties assigned to two Illyrian regiments. The senate, once the most august body in the Roman empire, lost all its consequence. The edicts, even of the most despotic emperors, had hitherto received the confirmation of the senate before they became law ; but Diocletian commenced a new line of policy. Instead of consulting them on public affairs, he and his colleagues adopted measures, and passed laws, on the advice of their own cabinet of ministers. The titles of consul censor, and tribune, with which the se-



nate had been in the habit of investing each emperor as he ascended the throne, and which, however vain, preserved some recollection of the glories of the republic, were discontinued ; and Diocletian assumed the title of Lord. He laid aside the simple robe of purple, by which the emperors had been distinguished, adopted an oriental richness of apparel, and even ventured to place on his brows that first object of Roman scorn and hate, a diadem. Access to his person became difficult ; the eastern mode of prostration was exacted of those who approached him ; and his court was filled with eastern ceremonies. Thus were the last remains of republican manners banished to make way for pomp and ostentation ; of which the consequence was a great increase of expence. The quadruple division of the empire rendered the administration complicated ; four courts required to be maintained upon an expensive scale, which led to a grievous increase of taxation, and to greater complaints on the part of the subjects than had been uttered during the administration of the most dissolute emperors. It is not the occasional extortion of a despotic and extravagant Sovereign and his dominions, which exhausts a country, so much as the steady, unrelaxed, over exactions of a regular and firm government. The extortions of the former fall upon the rich ; the demands of the latter grind down the poor, impoverish the industrious multitude, and destroy public prosperity at its source.

In the twentieth year of his reign, Diocletian repaired to Rome with Maximian, and celebrated a triumph, to commemorate the various victories which had been obtained during their administration. It was less magnificent than that of Aurelian and Probus; but it is remarkable as having been the *last*. From the foundation of the city, the Romans reckoned three hundred triumphs for victories gained over their enemies. Those martial pageantries had nourished and rewarded the valour which subdued the world; but the warlike spirit of the Romans was now burnt down to the socket, and the spirit-stirring triumphs ceased. A year after this spectacle, Diocletian assembled his court in the plains of Nicomedia, and voluntarily abdicated his throne. He retired to a place he had built at Salona, and spent the last nine years of his life in strict retirement. His declining years were, however, embittered with many disappointments. The new plan which he traced for the government of the empire, proved the source of discord and war; the favourites he had raised to power became ungrateful; and after hunting his wife and daughter, who were Christian converts, like wild beasts through the provinces, brought them to a miserable end. Nor is it impossible that remorse for the injuries he had inflicted upon the innocent Christians, may have filled the close of his life with bitter reflections.

Diocletian abdicated the throne A. D. 305; from that date to the year 323, that is, during eigh-

teen years, and more especially during the first nine years. the empire presented a scene of confusion and desolation similar to that which marked the era of Cæsar and Pompey. The cause of discord is distinctly to be traced to the division of power among four emperors, which had been made by Diocletian. Maximian, his colleague, having been likewise obliged to abdicate, the two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius assumed the supreme command. Galerius appointed two of his relatives Cæsars, while Constantius elevated his son, Constantine, to that dignity. The next year Constantius expired in the city of York; and his son assumed the higher dignity of Augustus. The son of the abdicated monarch Maximian also came on the theatre of action; and Maximian himself, though now at a very advanced age, became a candidate for the empire; so that there were, at one and the same time, six emperors, each at the head of a powerful army, and anxious for the destruction of all their rivals. It would be idle to waste the attention of the reader by a detail of the various plots and engagements of these contending princes;—suffice it therefore to say, that four of them perished within nine years of the retirement of Diocletian, leaving in the year 314, but two competitors for the supreme power, Constantine and Licinius, who soon after came to an accommodation, and divided the empire between them, the former ruling in the West, and the latter in the East. Disputes broke out between them,

however, in the year 324, and a great battle was fought at Chrysopolis, now Scutari, in which Licinius was completely overthrown. Constantine spared his life and allowed him to retire into privacy with an ample fortune; but the lust of power leading him again to mingle in political affairs, Constantine put him to death, and became sole monarch of the Roman empire.

The most important events of this period, were the final persecution of Christianity, and then its establishment as the religion of the state. These events, the effects of which stretch even to the present time, were crowded into the short period of twenty-one years. The professors of Christianity, as we have already narrated, had now been subjected during three centuries to successive persecutions; but the religion of Christ, so far from being crushed by the opposition of the public authorities, had gained fresh strength from every obstacle; and its converts, increasing in number with every year, now formed the majority of the subjects of the empire. The ministers of the gospel had gradually applied themselves to the studies which form a generous education, and many of them were among the most distinguished scholars of their time; though it must be confessed, that the mixture of heathen philosophy with the doctrines of the gospel, served in no small degree to destroy the simplicity of divine truth. The internal economy of the Christian Church had also acquired a form and consistency, which widely differed

from the simple model of the apostles. During the forty years which preceded the last persecution, the Christians had enjoyed a degree of repose, which they had never experienced before; their number was greatly augmented; they were introduced into various subordinate public offices, and even into the imperial household; and the army was filled with Christian officers and soldiers. Instead of the private houses to which their worship had been in a great measure confined, they were emboldened to build spacious churches in some of the principal cities of the empire. They had now grown into an immense body, not by taking up arms to defend themselves against the unjust persecution of their enemies, but by adhering to the sublime rule of their divine Saviour, of submitting to evil, rather than resisting it. The heathen priests could not fail to perceive that idolatry tottered to its base; that the shrines of their gods were deserted; and that unless some united effort, more vigorous than any which had been employed before, could be made to overthrow the Christian faith, the idolatrous system, on which they depended for their power and profit, must inevitably be annihilated. They found a willing agent in Galerius, the brutal associate of the emperor. Diocletian had during the first eighteen years of his reign granted an entire toleration to the Christians; and they had even proceeded to erect a magnificent church in the vicinity of his imperial residence at Nicomedia. Galerius prac-

tised every art to inflame him against the Christians, and at length prevailed on him to join in the work of persecution. Suddenly an edict hostile to the Christians, was promulgated through the city, A. D. 303 : the soldiers hastened to demolish the cathedral ; and this became the signal for the universal demolition of the Christian churches throughout the Roman world. Other edicts, each increasing in severity, were subsequently enacted, by which the books of the Christians were sought after and burnt ; they themselves were subjected to the most excruciating tortures which the ingenuity of man could devise ; and, that none might escape, every person who brought a suit in a civil court was obliged to sacrifice to an idol, upon an altar placed for this purpose at the entrance of the court. All the previous persecutions were partial in their range ; but this extended over the whole empire, except in the provinces of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, which were governed by Constantius. Other persecutions had arisen from the feeling of hate in the minds of the heathen ; this was begun and carried on with the avowed determination of eradicating Christianity from the world. For eight years under Galerius, and two under his successor, the fires of persecution ceased not to blaze through the provinces of the empire, and tens of thousands perished in the severest bodily tortures. Galerius, the author of these calamities, being brought to the brink of the grave in the year 311, by the



operation of a most loathsome disease, issued at length an order to stay the persecution, and to restore liberty to the Christians; thousands of whom were now seen to crowd the public roads returning from their exile, and singing songs of gratitude to Jehovah, their great deliverer. This was the last expiring effort of the heathen, to root out the religion of the gospel by persecution. We need scarcely say, that Christianity triumphed on this, as on former occasions, over all the efforts of its enemies.

Constantine, the son of Constantius, had been educated in a love of Christian truth, by his mother, the pious Helena; but while he possessed only a limited and precarious authority, his efforts for the relief of the Christians were necessarily partial. In the year 312, however, after he had conquered his rival Maxentius, he and his colleague Licinius, granted the Christians, by a public edict, full power to live after their own laws. It is supposed that, about this time also, he embraced Christianity himself, and contracted a hatred for the idols of the heathen. His exertions in behalf of the Christians became more and more direct and energetic, till at length, in the year 324, upon the defeat and death of his colleague Licinius, who had endeavoured to dethrone him, he published various edicts making Christianity the established religion of the Roman empire, and giving up to the Christians the deserted temples of the gods. Various motives have been assigned to Constan-

tine for this act, the most momentous in its consequences, of any which had transpired since Cæsar overturned the republic. Perhaps his motives were of a mixed character. That he firmly believed the great truths of Christianity, and wished to give them the weight of public authority, there can be no doubt; and one motive may possibly have been his attachment to the truth. But a politic prince like Constantine must also have found sufficient motives of worldly policy to direct him to the same course. He was swayed doubtless by the consideration, that the Christians now formed the majority of his subjects. He could not have been indifferent to the wonderful events which had passed under his own observation. He had seen the whole weight of the Roman empire brought forward to crush the Christian faith; and he had seen that faith come forth invigorated from the severe trial. He must have perceived that all the ancient systems of religious worship had been in close alliance with the state, not in opposition to it; that the influence of religion had been wielded by the same hands which wielded the destinies of the state; and that the directors of the civil polity of each kingdom were in many cases the chief ministers of religion. But in reference to the Christians, he beheld a vast body of men, scattered over the whole empire, but united to each other in the firm bonds of a common faith, whose religion was to his apprehension, totally disconnected from the state. He found them go-

governed by their own laws, and under the direction of a hierarchy with whose appointment the civil authorities had no interference. While he felt convinced that this growing body would speedily destroy the remnants of idolatry, he could not but perceive that the emperor had no influence over it, but in reference to civil matters. He determined therefore to incorporate Christianity with the state, and to give it the ascendancy over every other creed, on condition that he should be placed at the head of the Church. Christianity was accordingly made the law of the land; the Christians had a preference given them in regard of all offices, civil and military; and Constantine assumed the chief place in the Christian community, and issued edicts for destroying the temples of the heathen, and prohibiting sacrifices. And it is a remarkable fact, that while Christianity made its way triumphantly through three centuries of the most deadly persecutions to which any religion has ever been exposed, one hundred years after the support of Government had been withdrawn from the Roman idolatry, it disappeared from the face of the earth, and has never since been able to rear its head.

The forty years of repose which the Christians had enjoyed before the last persecution, had given rise to various errors of doctrine, to dissensions, to strife for pre-eminence, and to spiritual sloth. All these vices were aggravated and confirmed, by the alliance between the church and the state cemented

by Constantine. The possession of worldly power, wealth, and honour, destroyed the genuine spirit of the gospel, and introduced those radical corruptions into the Church, which ended in the gloom of the dark ages, during which Christianity appeared anything but the holy, spotless religion which Christ delivered to men ; and it was not till twelve hundred years after the age of Constantine, that, at the glorious period of the reformation, it was refined from its dross and began to appear again in its original lustre. The religion which had withstood the storms of so many persecutions lost its purity in the sunshine of worldly prosperity. Although therefore the establishment of Christianity by Constantine was a signal triumph over the idolatry of the ancient world, yet we cannot but join in the exclamation of the greatest poet of modern Italy : " O Constantine of how many evils has not thy fatal gift been the parent !"

Constantine, when he became sole emperor, was in his thirty-fifth year, prudent in council, indefatigable in business, bold in war. He reigned alone after the destruction of all his rivals, thirteen years, from A. D. 324 to 337, and introduced the most momentous changes into the government of the empire. Among these, we have already spoken of his establishment of the Christian religion. Partly in connection with this change, partly that the residence of the emperor might be nearer to the scene of danger from the irruptions of the barbarians on the Danube, and

of the Persians on the Euphrates, he removed the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium, on the site of which he erected a city, which continues to be called after him, Constantinople. It is difficult to decide, whether the city of Constantine, or that of Alexander the Great, be most advantageously situated for empire and commerce. Constantinople, placed on the confines of Europe and Asia, with the Euxine sea on one side, and the Mediterranean on the other, appears to be formed by nature for the capital and centre of a great empire. Constantine proceeded in solemn procession to lay the foundation of this city, destined to be the mistress of the East. The resources of the empire were at his command, and a magnificent city adorned with splendid palaces, with baths, with public offices, seminaries, and above all with Christian churches, arose on the banks of the Bosphorus, as if by the wand of a magician. To contribute to its embellishment, other cities were stripped of their paintings and sculptures, the works of the immortal masters of Greece; while the noblest buildings in the empire were pulled down, to contribute their columns and intabatures of exquisite workmanship. Great privileges were held out to settlers; the senators were invited from Rome; and the same immunities which had been successively bestowed on the old, were granted to the new capital. The erection of Constantinople, and the removal to it of the Court, gave a blow to the importance and



dignity of the eternal city, as Rome was called, which it never recovered.

Constantine in his new residence, far removed from all the recollections of the Roman Republic, completed those changes in the government which Diocletian had begun. He divided the Roman empire afresh, throwing all the provinces into four prefectures; the prefectures into dioceses; the dioceses into provinces. He multiplied the officers of his court, and like Diocletian laid aside the simplicity of the Roman purple, for the splendours of an eastern monarch. For this expensive system of government, new taxes were invented, and the old improved; the land tax was collected with more regularity and severity; imposts were levied upon articles of trade, and a new revenue was created by the obstruction of commerce; while the voluntary offerings which had been made to the emperors, were converted into a permanent cess. So decided were the changes which he introduced, that the empire no longer appeared the same.

As Constantine was now the head not only of the state but of the church also, he proceeded to remodel it, so as to suit the system of policy which he had established in the civil government. The four prelates of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, were raised in dignity above their brethren, and styled *patriarchs*; after these came *exarchs*, who had the spiritual charge of several provinces. In a lower grade were the *metropoli-*



*tans*, who ruled over a single province ; and under them in regular gradation, the *archbishops* and *bishops*. Over the whole church the emperor himself presided ; and it was not long before an opportunity was afforded him of exercising his controlling power.

During the three preceding centuries, various heresies had grown up in the Christian Church, through the departure of its professors from the integrity of the doctrine delivered in the New Testament, and the corruption of its purity by the introduction of a false philosophy. Some have reckoned up nearly two hundred heresies within this period ; but the great body of Christians continued firm in their attachment to the fundamental truths of the gospel. About the beginning of the fourth century, soon after the close of the last persecution, Arius of Alexandria, promulgated some heterodox opinions regarding the divinity of Christ, which were embraced by many of the prelates. A schism was thus introduced into the church, which long continued to destroy its peace, and which led to mutual persecutions of the most violent and disgraceful character. In order, if possible, to heal these dissensions, Constantine convened, by his own imperial authority, a general council of bishops and others at Nice, in Bithynia. The prelates, travelling at the public expense, hastened from the most distant parts of the empire to this city. The assembly was opened by Constantine in person, who presided at its deliberations, and gave the sanction

of the imperial authority to its decisions. The question regarding the divinity of Christ was warmly debated ; the orthodox triumphed over their adversaries, and a creed called the Nicene creed, was drawn up, in which were embodied the doctrines of Christian truth, as believed by the majority of the council. Those who subscribed it, continued in the emperor's favour ; those who rejected it, were banished.

The empire during the fourteen years of Constantine's sole reign enjoyed great tranquillity, and was disturbed only by one war with the Goths, which terminated favourably for the Romans. But although there was much splendour, and even vigour, in the administration of Constantine, the empire was silently yielding to decay ; and those virtues which could alone have preserved it, were gradually undermined by luxury and effeminacy. The latter years of Constantine were stained, among other crimes, with the murder of his innocent son. He died A. D. 337, at the age of sixty-four, near Nicomedia. He is among the few men to whose lot it has fallen to accomplish a mighty revolution in human affairs, and to give birth to changes of which the effects are felt to a distant age.

## SECTION 5.

*Constantine, Constantius, and Constans—Julian; his Persian expedition, and hatred of Christianity—Jorian—Valentinian and Vulcanus—Irruption of the Goths—Gratian—Theodosius the Great—Valentinian the Second—Final Division of the Empire—State of Christianity in the Fourth Century.*

Constantine left three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, the eldest twenty-one, the youngest, seventeen; and also a numerous family of relatives. These youths who had been bred in the lap of luxury, though totally unworthy to succeed so great a prince as Constantine, were elevated to the throne by their father's will and the voice of the troops, and commenced their reign by a perfidious massacre of all their relatives, except their two cousins, Gallus and Julian. They then proceeded to divide the empire among each other; Constantine obtained the new capital, the adjacent provinces, and a certain pre-eminence in rank; Constantius received Thrace and the East; Constans, Italy, Africa and Western Illyricum. Three years however had scarcely elapsed before Constantine, complaining that he had received an inadequate share of territory, marched against his brother Constans, but was defeated and slain; on which Constans, added the whole of his dominions to his own, excluding his elder brother from all share in the spoil. He continued to govern two-thirds of the Roman world for ten years, with little credit to himself or advantage to his subjects, and in the year 350 was slain by one of

his own generals, Magnentius, who assumed the purple, and sent to Constantius, to propose an equal division of the empire. The proposal was rejected with scorn ; and it became necessary to settle the dispute with the sword. The troops on both sides met in the plains adjacent to Mursa, a city in Hungary, and a battle of unusual fury ensued ; in which, though Constantius lost the flower of his veteran army, the usurper was defeated. He fled from the field of action, and recruited his troops, but finding success hopeless, fell on his own sword, and expired. Constantius now became sole master of the Roman empire, A. D. 353, seventeen years after the death of his father.

His reign, from his first accession to power, A. D. 337, to the period of his death, 361, was distinguished by constant hostility with Sapor, the powerful king of Persia ; whose efforts were directed to the recovery of the five provinces east of the Tigris which Galerius had wrested from the kingdom forty years before. Nine successive battles were fought with various success ; the strong city of Nisibis, was at one time besieged by Sapor with great vigour, but he was repulsed with ignominy ; the city of Amida, however, after an obstinate defence of seventy-three days, fell into his hands and was reduced to ashes. The capture cost him thirty thousand of his best troops, and constrained him to give up the idea of penetrating farther into the Roman territories.

The acts of Constantius after he became sole emperor, are little worthy of record. He promoted his cousin Gallus to the post of Cæsar, and then put him to death on account of his presumption. He visited the ancient capital but once during his reign; and as a memorial of his visit bestowed on it an obelisk, consisting of a single block of marble 115 feet in length, which had once adorned the temple of the sun in Egypt, and had been brought from thence at an immense expence of labour and money. During his conflict with Magnentius, he had invited the barbarous Germans to settle in Gaul, on their engaging to oppose that usurper; but he found it far easier to invite, than to expel them. With the view of getting rid of these intruders, he appointed his cousin Julian to command in Gaul. Julian, commonly known by the name of the *Apostate*, was a young man of eminent abilities and great subtilty, who endeavoured to form his character after the model of the ancient heroes. That which has given celebrity to his name, however, is the peculiar hatred he manifested to the Christian religion. His exertions in Gaul were eminently successful; he not only expelled the barbarians who had settled in it, but in three campaigns crossed the Rhine and carried the war into their own country. Constantius at length became jealous of his renown, and ordered him to send a number of his best regiments to the East to join him. The troops refused to move, and demanded that Julian should assume



the purple. Constantius no sooner heard of this revolt of the troops, and of the elevation of his cousin, than he prepared his troops for action. Julian marched with incredible speed to meet him; and the two armies wanted but a few days' march to come in sight of each other, when Constantius was carried off by a fever in Cilicia, after a reign of twenty-four years.

Julian was immediately acknowledged emperor. His reign, which lasted but twenty months, was distinguished by his attempt to restore idolatry and root out Christianity, and by his Persian campaign. His hatred of Christianity, in which he had been educated, knew no bounds, and he spared no pains to eradicate it. If he did not rekindle the fires of persecution, it was simply because of the ill success which had attended all the attempts of former emperors, to put down Christianity by force. He expelled the Christians from all offices of state, took away their lands, and excluded their children from the schools of elegant literature; while at the same time he employed his pen during his brief reign in writing against them. Out of spite to the Christians, he also invited the Jews to re-build their temple at Jerusalem; but the attempt proved abortive. He was led to engage in the Persian war, partly to revenge the injuries which Sapor had inflicted on the Romans, and partly by a wish to rival the exploits of Alexander the Great. Contrary to the advice of his best generals, he burnt his fleet after he had



crossed the Tigris, and penetrated into the enemy's country, under the conduct of a deserter whose object was to betray him. As he was passing through a dangerous defile, the Persian cavalry fell upon his troops, and he himself was killed by an arrow, not far from the spot which had proved so fatal to Crassus four centuries before.

The position of the Roman army was now perilous in the extreme. Without provisions or guides, at a long distance from their own frontier, surrounded on all sides by a vigilant and bold enemy, there seemed little chance of escape. The day after the death of Julian, the troops elected Jovian emperor, a man of unimpeachable morals and piety. Under his command, the troops retreated, though with extreme difficulty, to the bank of the Tigris, followed by the victorious army of Sapor. An attempt to cross the stream having proved ineffectual, Jovian listened to the proposals of the Persian monarch, and consented to relinquish the five disputed provinces, as the price of safety for his army. This was the first instance in which the Romans during a thousand years had relinquished by compulsion any province which had been incorporated with their dominions; and the degradation was bitterly felt throughout the empire. But the disgrace in this case does not attach to Jovian, who saved a Roman army from annihilation, by the sacrifice of provinces which it was no longer possible to preserve, but to Julian, who had madly engaged in this fatal expedition.

Jovian was a Christian; during his short reign of eight months, Christianity again became the predominant creed, and to use the words of an historian hostile to Christianity, "as soon as the smile of royal patronage was withdrawn, the genius of paganism, which had been fondly raised and cherished by the arts of Julian, sunk irrevocably in the dust."

After the death of Jovian, A. D. 364, the Roman world remained ten days without a master, when Valentinian, an able general, and a Christian, was elected. He immediately nominated his brother Valens his colleague, to whom he allotted the East, with Constantinople for his residence, reserving for himself the western provinces of the empire, with Milan as the seat of his government. The city of Rome had now ceased to be inhabited, and was scarcely even visited, by the emperors. Valentinian governed for twelve years, from 364 to 376, with vigour and prudence. He was a man of great courage and talent, and was engaged during his whole reign, in repelling the inroads of the barbarians along the entire European frontier of the Roman empire. Though cruel by nature, he granted a universal toleration in religious matters to all his subjects, both heathen and Christian, Arian and orthodox. The basest act of his reign was the murder of his faithful and able general Theodosius, through whose talents he had recovered Britain and Africa. He died while engaged in an expedition against the barbarians, and

left the throne of the West to his son Gratian, then seventeen, a youth of mild and amiable manners, who shared his government with his infant brother Valentinian, usually called the Second.

Meanwhile events of the deepest importance to the Roman empire arose in the dominions of Valens. The Goths under their renowned king Hermanric, were in quiet possession of the country which stretched from the Baltic to the Euxine sea, when a sudden irruption of the Huns, a new race of savages, changed the aspect of affairs, and hastened the downfall of the Roman Empire. The Huns were from the wilds of Scythia, a people of Mogul extraction, of the fiercest aspect, and most barbarous manners, who had already broken in upon the empire of China. Some internal commotion, of which we have no record, drove a considerable body of them in search of a new settlement on the north-eastern corner of Europe, then inhabited by the Goths. As the Goths were unable to stem the tide of this irruption, part of them submitted to these barbarians; but the greater part, convinced that there could be no safety till the broad Danube was interposed between them and the Huns, advanced with their wives, children, and property, to the banks of that stream, and implored Valens to receive them under the protection of the empire, and to allot them the vacant lands in Thrace, promising faithfully to defend that frontier against other barbarians. Valens hesitated long, but at length granted their

request ; and a million of Goths were thus introduced into the empire, and disarmed. The management of this multitude, frantic through hunger and despair, was a task of no common difficulty, yet it was entrusted to the basest agents. The wretches who were appointed to conduct the arrangements with the Goths, studying only their own advantage, sold them the vilest provisions at enormous prices, deprived them of their wealth, their property, and finally of their daughters, whom the Goths were obliged to sell into prostitution to procure food. Exasperated to madness by this treatment, starving as they were amidst the wealth and plenty of a luxuriant province, they determined at length to seek for revenge. Their national banner was unfurled, their troops embodied, and they came to battle with their oppressors, and gained the victory. The fertile fields of Thrace were speedily blighted with devastation ; and Valens, roused at length to a sense of his danger, determined to combat the million of strangers whom he had incautiously admitted into the bosom of the empire. An indecisive battle was fought at Salices ; the Goths invited across the Danube a fresh swarm of their own nation ; and a portion of the Huns also hastened to share in the plunder of the empire. Valens marched out of Constantinople to encounter this host, and though entreated to wait for the auxiliaries which his nephew Gratian was bringing up, rushed headlong into action on the plains of Adrianople. The Roman

army was entirely routed ; two-thirds of the troops fell on the field of battle, and Valens himself was slain. Such a defeat, and so great a carnage, the Romans had not experienced since the battle of Cannæ. The provinces of the East were now at the mercy of these barbarians ; and they laid siege to the cities of Adrianople and Constantinople, but to take a fortified city was beyond their skill. They were obliged therefore to content themselves with desolating the districts, which lay between the shores of the Euxine and the confines of Italy.

Gratian was on his way to relieve his uncle, when he heard of the fatal issue of the battle of Adrianople. Consulting the public welfare, rather than his private interest, he raised to the throne of Valens, Theodosius, a Spaniard by birth ; who, though then living in obscurity, was known to be a man of the most exalted merit. To him he committed the arduous government of the East, while he reserved for himself the provinces of the West. Theodosius conducted the Gothic war with the greatest prudence and success. The late defeat had broken the spirit of the Roman troops. In order to inspire them with confidence, the emperor always avoided a battle, seized every opportunity to harass the barbarians, to cut off their supplies, and to sow discord among them ; and four years after the death of Valens, the Goths were brought to submit to the Roman power. They were settled quietly in the provinces, their immediate wants were supplied by a distribution of



corn, and their future comforts secured by an exemption from tribute. Forty thousand of their bravest warriors were received into the Roman army, and to them was now committed the task of defending the frontiers of the empire. By these expedients, the dictate of necessity, not the result of choice, was the storm, excited by the irruption of the Goths, dispelled ; but it was easy to foresee, that beneath this apparent security lay the germ of future commotions, that the welfare of the empire was irretrievably compromised, and that the swords of the Goths would be turned against the empire, upon the first change of a weak for a wise empire.

Theodosius ascended the throne in the year 379. Gratian, his benefactor, continued to govern the West for four years, but he estranged the minds of his subjects and his troops, by his inattention to public business, and his fondness for the chase. He made Paris his capital. In the fourth year of his reign, Maximus, who commanded the troops in Britain, marched against him, and put him to death. Maximus, who, like the great Theodosius, was a native of Spain, sent to inform him of the success of his arms, and to request that he might be permitted to retain Gaul, Spain and Britain. Theodosius thinking his own dominions in the east sufficiently large, acceded to his request, on condition that he should confine himself to the countries beyond the Alps, and that Valentinian the Second, the younger brother of Gratian, should



enjoy the dominion of Italy, Africa, and Western Illyrium. If Maximus had contented himself with these ample domains, he might have reigned in peace ; but he coveted those which had been allotted to Valentinian, crossed the Alps, and captured Milan the capital, more however by treachery than by valour. The young emperor fled, and all Italy submitted to the usurper. Theodosius finding that no treaties could bind Maximus, marched against him with a large force composed chiefly of the Goths and Huns who had been received into pay, and trained in the Roman discipline. Maximus was defeated and perished. Theodosius, thus master of the world, would have been excusable had he retained the entire sovereignty in his own hands ; but he acted a nobler part, and seating Valentinian on the throne at Milan, restored to him all the territories which Maximus had wrested from him. Before the young emperor, however, had attained his twentieth year, he was murdered by his own general of cavalry, A. D. 392, and Theodosius from this period became sole emperor. His conduct was in every instance wise, prudent, and honourable. If on one occasion he yielded to the impulse of revenge, on the revolt of the noble city of Thessalonica, and put many thousands of the citizens to death, he manifested deep and sincere repentance. The principles of Christian truth were firmly rooted in his mind, and brought forth the most satisfactory fruit. He defended the empire, surrounded as it was with innumerable foes, more

by his wisdom than by actual war. He arrested for a time the rapid progress of decay, in the mouldering empire of the Cæsars; and if, in imitation of the example of Gratian in his own case, he had bequeathed the sceptre to the most worthy, the fabric of Roman grandeur might still have been preserved for some time longer. But with paternal weakness he appointed as his successors his own two sons Arcadius and Honorius, youths brought up in luxury, and unfit for the throne. Having bestowed the empire of the East on Arcadius, and that of the West on Honorius, he died in the year 395, three years after he had become sole emperor.

The genius of Rome expired with Theodosius. He was the last monarch who ruled over the whole Roman empire; the last who led the Roman armies into the field. The empire which he divided among his sons, was never re-united. Within seventy years after this event, the Western empire, overrun by the barbarians of the north, was broken up into fragments, and the ground-work was laid of the present European monarchies; while the Eastern empire at Constantinople continued to drag on an inglorious existence for a thousand years.

The history of the Christian church during the period which elapsed between the establishment of the faith by Constantine, and the final division of the empire, is sufficiently gloomy. The smiles of power fostered a tone of worldly mindedness within the church, totally incompatible with the spirit of the gospel; its dignitaries became proud, luxu-

rious and haughty ; and the luxury displayed in the household of Damasus, bishop of Rome, was exceeded only by that of the imperial court, and afforded a pernicious example to other ecclesiastics. Various heresies sprung up, particularly in the East, in that rank soil which gave birth to almost all the wild religious speculations of that age. But the most popular and pernicious heresy of this century was that of Arius ; and as the secular power was now employed to uphold or exterminate religious opinions, a savage character was given to the dissensions occasioned by this schism. Some of the emperors espoused the doctrines of Arius, and raised such persecutions against the orthodox, as to recall the memory of the last pagan persecutions. Others, again, embraced the Nicene creed, and used every effort to root out Arianism. Theodosius the Great, in particular, applied himself so strenuously to this object, as almost to eradicate Arianism, from the East. To the shame of the Christians was it asserted by their enemies, that when they ceased to be persecuted by the heathen, they turned their rage against one another.

This age was also marked by a very general departure from the doctrines of the New Testament. The spirit of the gospel was smothered under a load of idle ceremonies ; and those errors which rob Christianity of its divine energy had already discovered themselves in this early period. To these we shall not advert at present, but, as

we proceed down the stream of history, notice them more distinctly when they become matured into general practice. In fact, by the close of the fourth century, Christianity had become so completely disfigured by human inventions, of which the object was, not to promote the glory of God, but to secure power and riches to its ministers, that little of its original features could be discerned. Yet were there not wanting, even in that degenerate age, men who boldly professed the truth, defended and illustrated it by their writings, and of whom many adorned it by their practice. Athanasius, the great champion of the orthodox creed ; Ambrose, who refused to admit to the sacrament the great Theodosius, in consequence of the wanton massacre of Thessalonica ; the eloquent Gregory ; the learned Jerome ; Basil, justly surnamed the Great ; Chrysostom, a man of the noblest genius ; Lactantius, the purest Latin writer among the fathers, and the far renowned Augustin, shed a lustre over the Christian church of the fourth century.

Christianity fostered by the power and influence of the emperors, spread rapidly through the empire. The cause of idolatry became daily more and more hopeless ; the altars were deserted, and the heathen sacrifices ceased. Yet amidst this general defection, one body, and that the highest of that age, the Roman senate, still continued to profess heathenism. But in the year 383, in a full meeting of its members, Theodosius, the emperor,

put the question. Whether the worship of Jupiter or that of Christ should be the religion of the Romans? On a regular division, Jupiter was condemned, and the Christian faith was adopted, by the successors of Scipio, and Cæsar, and Sícero. The senate proceeded farther to proscribè generally the worship of idols; and thus the superstitions of heathenism, of which for six hundred years the Roman senate had been the chief stay, now received their death blow from that body. It was in this century, also, that the distant regions of Ethiopia and Georgia received the gospel. In Gaul, the venerable Martin, bishop of Tours, laboured with great success in the conversion of the natives. The Goths were the first of the German nations which embraced the doctrines of Christ; but though the rays of divine truth first dawned on them during the preceding century, it was not till after they had crossed the Danube in the reign of Valens, that Christianity became their national creed. This was brought about partly through the command of that emperor, but chiefly through the exertions of the justly celebrated Ulphilas, their bishop, who prepared a translation of the Scriptures in their tongue, in a character which he had invented for that purpose.



## CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 395—814.

EPOCH SIXTH :—FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE DEATH OF CHARLEMAGNE.

## SECT. 1.

*Unity of the Roman Empire broken—The Western Empire—Provinces allotted to the Western and Eastern Empire—Honorius—Stilicho—Irruption of the Goths under Alaric—Flight of Honorius—Battle of Pollentia—Defeat of Alaric—Ravenna made the Capital—Irruption of the Alans, the Suevi and Burgundians—their defeat—Stilicho murdered by Honorius—Alaric invades Italy and besieges Rome three times—Sack of Rome by the Goths—Progress of the Goths, the Burgundians and Suevi—State of Gaul—of Britain—Death of Honorius—Valentinian the III.—Ætius and Boniface—Genseric invades and conquers Africa—Reappearance of the Huns under Atilla—He pours down on Gaul—Battle of Chalons—Defeat of the Huns—Foundation of Venice—Atilla marches against Rome—His retreat and Death—Valentinian murders Stilicho—Genseric plunders Rome—The last nine Emperors—Augustulus—Extinction of the Empire by Odoacer.*

The course of history which has for several centuries moved in the individual current of the Roman empire, will now branch out into various streams. From the first conquests of the Romans beyond the limits of Italy, to the death of the last sole emperor Theodosius, for six hundred years, the History of Rome was the History of the World. The unity of that magnificent empire is now broken; and from its fragments we perceive the gradual formation of various kingdoms. We



have now to trace the swarming of the Germanic hive, the irruption and settlement of the northern barbarians in the European provinces of the empire, who founded upon the ruins of Roman grandeur the modern monarchies of Christendom. With so wide a prospect before us, we shall be constrained to avoid detail, and passing more rapidly from eminence to eminence, to dwell only on the more prominent points of Modern History.

The division which Theodosius made of the Roman empire, was final. But though the Eastern Empire gradually contracted in its limits, subsisted for more than a thousand years after the separation, while that of the west was extinguished within a hundred years of that event, it is this latter branch which claims superior importance. It embraces the history of *Modern Europe*, and the progress of those tribes, who, issuing from the north in a state of the wildest barbarism, have attained, through the refinement of learning and civilization, and the elevation of Christian morals, the foremost station in the world. To the revolutions in the provinces of the Western Empire, therefore, will the attention of the reader be more particularly drawn. In this section we propose to trace the final struggles of the Roman empire in the west.

The various provinces of the empire were divided with great impartiality between the two sons of Theodosius. To Arcadius in the east were assigned Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt, Da-

cia and Macedonia. To Honorius in the west, were allotted, Italy, Africa, Gaul, Spain and Britain, Noricum, Pannonia, and Dalmatia. The wealth, population and military strength of each division were nearly equal. Honorius, a monarch of the weakest character, ascended the western throne of the Cæsars in the year 395, and dragged on an inglorious reign of twenty-eight years till the year 423. Stilicho, the son of a barbarous Vandal, but the master spirit of that period, had raised himself by his talents in the service of Theodosius, and was appointed by him the guardian of his two sons. The division of the empire, both in interests and in territory, led him to devote his genius to the service of Honorius, and there wanted not occasions for its exercise. The Goths, who, as we have already stated, had crossed the Danube, and had been settled by the policy of Theodosius, in the provinces south of that river, no sooner heard of his death, than they prepared to renew their encroachments. Their leader, the bold and artful Alaric, sounded the trumpet of war, and the Goths, forsaking the plough, flocked to his standard. The more distant Goths caught the notes of war; Scythia again poured forth its hordes; and the increasing mass of barbarians rolled down like a torrent on the richest provinces of the Roman empire. Passing through the straits of Thermopylæ, which had been rendered immortal by the valour of Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans, they spread devastation over the whole

extent of Greece. Stilicho marched with an army to repel the invaders, and blockaded their camp; but Alaric, with his accustomed skill, suddenly burst through the lines of the besiegers, and escaped. Meanwhile the weak and foolish ministers of Arcadius, vexed at the appearance of a Western army in a province which had been allotted to the Eastern empire, in a moment of insanity, took the barbarian under their protection, and clothed him with the character of Imperial General in Illyrium. Stilicho, confounded at this petty feeling of jealousy, which could stoop to patronize even the common enemy of both empires, returned to Italy. Alaric, as might have been expected, used his new power only to prepare for fresh aggressions, and in the year A. D. 400, crossed the Alps, and marched upon Milan, then the residence of Honorius. The feeble emperor abandoned the defence of Italy to Stilicho, and hastened with a long train of menials to cross the Alps and seek a refuge in Southern Gaul. He had not proceeded farther than Asta when Alaric came up with him, and instantly formed the siege of the city. Stilicho, bent on the safety of Italy and of the emperor, to which he was willing to sacrifice the interests of the more remote provinces, recalled the troops from the Rhine, from Gaul, and even from Britain. With these forces he advanced to the relief of his master, and surrounding the Goths in their own camp, reduced them to extremities. Alaric was obliged to give battle, on the plains of

Pollentia, and was entirely defeated. Stilicho, who considered that the departure of this barbarous horde could not be purchased at too dear a price, offered Alaric money; and the Goth, from the love of gold and the fear of a second encounter, agreed to evacuate Italy. Honorius and his victorious general entered Rome in triumph A. D. 404, and were received with acclamations by a senate and a people who had not seen their emperor more than three times in the previous hundred years. Games were celebrated with becoming splendour; and Honorius embraced the opportunity of abolishing the barbarous combats of gladiators, that remnant of Roman idolatry, which all the influence of Christianity had, till this time, been unable to eradicate.

Honorius had been too sensibly frightened at Milan, to trust himself again within its walls, and determined to seek some place of greater security. He selected Ravenna, an obscure town, on the shores of the Adriatic, a few miles from the estuary of the Po. This place, which was naturally strong through the morasses that surrounded it, rendered by fortifications the most impregnable fortress in Italy; and to this fort, the ignoble successor of the Cæsars, the ruler of the Western world retired, and, abandoning the cares of empire to his ministers, devoted his life to luxuriant repose.

A year or two after this event, a horde of Vandals, Alans, Suevi, and Burgundians, issuing from

the north of Germany to the number of 400,000, crossed the Danube, and pursuing their course across the Alps, laid waste the plains of Italy, and laid siege to Florence. The trembling inhabitants again looked for deliverance to Stilicho; but the empire was reduced to such a state of weakness, that with every effort he could assemble an army of only 40 000 men. With these he besieged Radagaisus, their chief, in his own camp; famine soon began to prey on that vast multitude of barbarians; pestilence followed in its train; and the army, reduced to the last extremity, submitted to Stilicho. Radagaisus, the leader, was beheaded, and many captives were sold for slaves; but a remnant of nearly 100,000 men, marching westward, fell upon the defenceless provinces of Gaul, sacked the most flourishing cities, and turned the fields into a desert. From this country they never returned; but formed a permanent settlement in south eastern Gaul, and then crossing the Pyrenees, overspread the whole of Spain. From this event may be dated the separation of the countries west of the Alps from the dominion of Rome.

The Court of Honorius at Ravenna was now sunk into such a depth of profligacy, that at the instigation of his base flatterers, he consented, A. D. 408, to the murder of Stilicho, the hero who had twice saved the empire, the only man capable of defending it from the dangers which menaced it. The murder of this illustrious general and statesman, is one of the few events that has



rescued the reign of this poor, weak prince from oblivion. Alaric, who still hovered on the confines of Italy, no sooner heard that the great Stilicho was no more, than dismissing all fear, he rushed down on the plains of Italy with his ruthless barbarians and laid siege to Rome. Rome was still the first city in the world. It was defended by walls, twenty-three miles in circumference and contained a million and a quarter of inhabitants. Its nobles were still in the enjoyment of boundless wealth, and possessed estates in the country, equal in magnitude to those of the first nobles in Britain at the present day. For six hundred and seventeen years, since the memorable descent of Hannibal, no foreign enemy had ventured to approach its fortifications. To this city Alaric now laid siege. The haughty patricians were at first astonished at the insolence of a barbarian who had dared to invest the mistress of the world, but they were soon reduced to humbler thoughts by the approach of famine. No provisions were permitted to enter the city; the poor died by thousands of starvation, and their putrid carcases inflicted on the city the horrors of pestilence. The rich bartered their gold and jewels for the meanest food. Driven at length to despair, the senators sent to implore the compassion of Alaric. The haughty barbarian replied that he would leave them nothing save their lives; but gradually mitigating his demands, he agreed to break up his camp and retire, on receiving a sum equal to



sixty-two maunds of gold, and three hundred and seventy-five maunds of silver. With this ransom he marched from Rome towards Ravenna, and endeavoured to negotiate with Honorius; but this pre-eminently foolish monarch treated him with such insolence, that Alaric, in 409, again marched towards Rome, took the port of Ostia with all its granaries, and reduced the inhabitants to the brink of starvation; but on their consenting to receive a sovereign at his hands, he broke up his camp, and proceeded through the southern provinces of Italy, marking his footsteps with desolation. The miserable shadow of an emperor whom he had placed on the throne, revolted during his absence, and Alaric marched a third time against Rome, A. D. 410, and with the aid of the slaves and domestics obtained possession of it. "Eleven hundred and sixty years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city which had subdued and civilized so large a portion of mankind was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Scythia and Germany." For six days did the barbarians continue to plunder the mistress of the world of whatever was most valuable in public or private wealth. Females were delivered up to the brutality of the troops; the nobles were reduced to beg their bread; the spoils of the world, accumulated in Rome during ten centuries, fell into the hands of the savages, and nothing escaped their rapacity but the Churches of the Apostles.

After having sacked Rome, Alaric marched

through the south of Italy spreading havoc and desolation around, and arrived at the narrow strait which divided Italy, from Sicily; the point from whence the Romans had passed over to the conquest of Sicily and of the world, in the bloom of their power. Alaric prepared to embark his troops for this island, and proposed after he had stripped it of its wealth, to pass into Africa and lay waste its provinces. But the cold hand of death froze the current of his enterprise, while his troops were in the act of embarking. Adolphus his successor, relinquished the ambitious plan, and marching his victorious troops back to the north of Italy, made peace with Honorius, married his sister Placidia, and four years after the irruption of Alaric crossing the Alps, settled his Goths in Gaul, where he established the Visigoth kingdom, which subsequently extended to Spain, and continued till the irruption of the Arabs.

The feeble empire of Honorius subsisted only by sufferance. His generals in Britain, Gaul and Spain revolted; but as their rebellion was speedily subdued, it would be redundant to detail their progress in this brief sketch. Our attention must be more particularly fixed on the various tribes of Germanic barbarians, who, invited by the weakness of the empire, poured down like a torrent on the south. We have already stated that the Burgundians and other barbarians to the number of 100,000, when defeated by Stilicho, crossed the Alps. The Burgundians settled in the eastern di-

vision of Gaul, and gave their own name to that province, which is still known as Burgundy. The Suevi, the Alans and the Vandels, crossed the Pyrennees, and divided the whole of Spain among them. Spain had enjoyed the most profound tranquillity for four centuries under the Romans. Several of its cities were numbered among the most illustrious in the Roman world; its manufactures, trade and agriculture, were in the most flourishing condition. All these fair fruits of peace and tokens of plenty were obliterated, and the country turned into a desert. To expel them, Honorius enlisted Adolphus, the Gothic successor of Alaric, in his service, and made over to him the southern districts of Gaul. He established his capital at Narbonne, from whence it was subsequently removed to Thoulouse. Adolphus was murdered by an assassin; after one intermediate reign, Wallia was raised to the throne. He made war on the barbarian invaders of Spain as the emperor's lieutenant; and the Alans were cut off almost to a man; and the remnant of the race was incorporated with the Vandals, who were forced to seek an asylum in Gallicia. The Suevi were saved from utter destruction by putting themselves under the protection of the Roman empire. The countries which the Goths conquered in the name of Honorius, they retained for their own advantage. Thus the dominion of Spain passed for ever from the Roman sceptre.

Of Gaul, the eastern part was held by the Eur-

gundians; the southern by the Goths; the western was still attached to the empire, and governed by a succession of generals of the very first order of merit. But surrounded as they were on all sides by encroaching barbarians, and unsupported by the emperor, it was easy to perceive that the hold of Rome on this province could not last long.

In this general disruption of the western empire, Britain could not be expected to preserve its connection with Rome. Honorius was constrained to withdraw his troops from it for the defence of Italy, and it is even said, though on doubtful authority, that he expressly wrote to the Britons to absolve them from their allegiance. The Romans when they finally quitted Britain had enjoyed possession of it for four centuries. They found it peopled by a race of savages; they left it in a state of high civilization. They found the Britons living in rude huts resembling rather the retreats of beasts than the habitations of men; they left the country covered with smiling villages, and adorned with ninety-two considerable towns. They found the natives under the influence of a bloody superstition; they left them in possession of the celestial, though somewhat obscured, light of the Gospel. Abandoned to their own resources, the Britons continued for forty years to govern themselves, though from the loss of historical records, we know little of the complexion of their government, or of the actual condition of the country, except that it was torn by rival factions, and ra-

vaged, in the north by the Picts and Scots, and on the sea coast by pirates. Then came the invasion of the heathen Saxons, who swept away every vestige of Roman refinement; laws, language, literature and religion; and plunged the country again into ignorance and barbarism. Out of this chaos arose by slow gradations the modern civilization of Britain.

Thus in the reign of the first emperor of the west, after the fatal division made by Theodosius, the three powerful and flourishing provinces of Britain, Gaul and Spain, were virtually torn from the empire, and were never reunited to it. We shall afterwards follow up the history of these (now distinct) countries to the era of Charlemagne. At present we turn to the Western Empire, rapidly hastening to its close. Honorius died in the year 423, and John, one of the officers of the palace, seized the vacant throne. The emperor at Constantinople, however, sent an army into Italy, and the usurper was taken and beheaded. The emperor might have retained the throne, and reunited the two divisions of the empire, but he wisely contented himself with his own dominions, and refused a sceptre, which he must have maintained against inexhaustible swarms of barbarians, "the blue-eyed myriads of the Baltic shore." Valentinian the third, a child, six years of age, the grandson of Theodosius, was placed on the throne at Ravenna, under the guardianship of his mother Placidia, who had been married, as we have said, to



Adolphus. The eastern emperor, however, took advantage of these events to annex Dalmatia, Western Illyricum, Pannonia and Noricum to his own territories. The reign of Valentinian extended from 425 to 455; of which period Placidia managed the government twenty-five years. Her armies were commanded by Ætius and Boniface, who are deservedly termed the last of the Romans. Happy would it have been for the welfare of mankind if these great generals had understood each other; but Ætius could not brook a rival. When, therefore, Boniface was sent to command in Africa, Ætius forgetting, in the blindness of jealousy, every feeling of honour, on the one hand advised the empress to recall him, on the other, secretly counselled Boniface to resist her commands, representing that his recall would be the forerunner of his death. Boniface, in a fatal moment, revolted against his sovereign, and sent to invite Genseric, the Vandal, who had invaded Spain, to conquer Africa. The Vandal gladly embraced the proposal, and in the year 429, passed into Africa with those troops, who in twenty years had penetrated from the Elbe to Gibraltar. The whole amount of his forces did not exceed fifty thousand men. His progress was facilitated by the junction of the Moors, a savage race who inhabited the woods and valleys of Mount Atlas, and by the discontent of the Donatists, who constituted a large proportion of the Christian inhabitants, and had experienced the most bitter persecution from

Honorius. Of this persecuted sect Genseric proclaimed himself the champion. Suddenly this peaceful province, rich with the gifts of nature, the granary which supplied Italy with food, was laid desolate; and the Court of Ravenna was thrown into consternation by the sudden stoppage of those supplies which had for five centuries been furnished without interruption from Africa. Famine stared them in the face. The imperial ministers sought an explanation with Boniface; and the duplicity of Ætius was established by comparing his double correspondence. Boniface obtained the forgiveness of Placidia, and directed his efforts to the expulsion of the barbarians whom he had himself invited; but the mischief was irreparable. He was defeated in two engagements, and obliged to fly into Italy with the remnant of his army. Ætius, his rival, hastened with his troops from Gaul to oppose him; and the two generals, the union of whose councils might have saved the state, engaged in a bloody battle with each other. Ætius was defeated, but Boniface received a wound of which he soon after died. The Vandals continued to spread their ravages through Africa, and ten years after their arrival, took Carthage, which, during six centuries, had gradually recovered from its fall, and growing up into a flourishing city, had become the capital of the province. We now quit the Vandals to attend to the progress of the Huns.

The irruption of the Huns has already been

mentioned as having occurred in the reign of Theodosius, about the year A. D. 375. During fifty subsequent years, their progress is ill-defined in the obscure annals of that period, though it is known that they continued to enlarge their territories at the expense both of other barbarian nations, and of the Eastern empire. In the reign of Attila, the Huns again became the terror of the world. This formidable barbarian succeeded to the throne in the year 433, and commenced that series of desolations, which led to his being denominated the 'scourge of God.' His figure is thus described. He possessed 'a large head, a swarthy complexion, deep seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in the place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short square body.' It is difficult to trace the extent of his empire, but it does not admit of a doubt, that it was the most colossal ever governed by a single man. The whole of Germany trembled at his nod; the kingdoms of Scandinavia on either shore of the Baltic obeyed his laws. A hundred kings of inferior note attended on him. On the west his dominions touched the confines of Belgium, and stretching through the whole length of Germany and Scythia, terminated on the borders of China. Thus his frontiers pressed both on Persia, and on the eastern and western empires, and mankind stood in trembling anxiety, not knowing on what country he would pour down with his barbarians.

Just at this juncture, Genseric, who had con-

quered Africa, was menaced by the united armies of the eastern and western empire the emperors having agreed to combine their efforts for the recovery of that province, and assembled their fleets in the ports of Sicily. In the hope of creating a diversion, Genseric invited Attila to fall upon the provinces of the east. The Hun was not long in finding a pretext; and at once the whole breadth of Europe, as it extends five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic sea, was invaded. In three successive battles the troops of the east were vanquished; the whole country was laid waste with fire and sword, and the progress of the barbarians was clearly defined by the conflagration of the towns, and the havoc of the fields. Seventy cities were entirely destroyed, and an incredible number of people were either put to death, or sold into slavery.

The Western emperor, sunk in sloth, refused the aid of his troops, and the Eastern empire was preserved from dissolution only by the impregnable bulwarks of Constantinople, which Attila had not sufficient science to capture. When nothing was left to plunder, the Hun granted peace to the emperor, but only on the most disgraceful terms. A large portion of territory to the south of the Danube was ceded to him, by which the frontier of the barbarians was brought nearer to the capital; the tribute was also augmented three-fold. This treaty of peace was concluded in the year 446; but it could not be supposed in the nature

of things, that conditions assented to through fear could be either permanent or satisfactory. Attila continued, therefore, for four years to exhaust the imperial treasury by fresh demands. In the year 450, Marcian succeeded to the throne of Constantinople, and feeling that concession only produced fresh demands, boldly refused the annual tribute. Attila prepared for war, but undecided whether to turn his arms against the eastern or the western empire, sent an equal defiance to the Courts of Constantinople and Ravenna. His ambassadors were instructed to say to each emperor, "Attila, my lord, and thy lord, commands thee to prepare a palace for his immediate reception." Reflecting however that the provinces of the east had been exhausted by his ravages, and by the payment of the annual tribute, and that the west was likely to yield a richer harvest, he broke up his camp in Hungary and moved down upon Gaul and Italy.

The feeble Valentinian at this time occupied the throne ; but all real power was in the hands of *Ætius*, of whom we have had occasion to speak in terms of great disparagement regarding his conduct towards Boniface. With some imperfections, however, he was the ablest man of the age, possessed of the most profound judgment, and the highest military talents. He was the last of that long line of Roman generals, who had rendered the name of Rome illustrious through the world. He had heretofore sustained the imperial authority with vigour in Gaul, and had kept down by his su-



perior talents, the growing ambition of the Franks, the Burgundians and the Goths. The kingdom of the Goths had gradually been consolidated under Theodoric, who cherished the largest views of conquest, in which but for Ætius he might have succeeded. That general now concluded a seasonable treaty with Genseric in Africa, by which Italy was protected from the maritime inroads of his barbarians; and with an undaunted spirit prepared for the storm that was brewing in the north.

The various tribes of Germany and Scythia flocked to the tents of the Hun, and an innumerable host marched under his standard from his royal residence in Hungary to lay waste the south. The hostile myriads in the first instance were poured upon Belgium, and stopped not till they had reached the heart of Gaul. The consternation of the country was universal; the inhabitants abandoned their fields, and fled before the cloud of Attila's cavalry. No obstacle retarded his progress, which was marked with desolation; neither the innocence of infancy, nor the sanctity of the priesthood, afforded any protection against the brutal violence of his savage hordes. The barbarians who had settled in Gaul, wavered between Attila and the Roman emperor. Ætius hastened into the province, and heard, not without alarm, that even the powerful Theodoric, the king of the Goths, hesitated to assist in expelling the Huns. The noble Roman instantly sent an ambassador to represent to him, that an ambitious

conqueror, who aspired to the conquest of the earth, could only be baffled by the union of all whom he meant to oppress. With these and similar arguments Theodoric was induced to join the Romans, and though far advanced in years, determined to proceed to the field in person, accompanied by his two sons and the flower of the Gothic army. The example of the Goths induced the other barbarians to take part against Attila, and Ætius was enabled to proceed in search of him with an army composed of various tribes of barbarians. Attila marched into the plain of Chalons, that his cavalry might have ample room for manœuvring; and there was fought the memorable battle which was to decide whether the Huns should add Europe to their dominions, and create one universal monarchy of barbarism. The battle, says the historian, was fierce, various, and obstinate, such as could not be paralleled either in the present or in past ages. One hundred and sixty-seven thousand men, according to the lowest computation, fell on the field; among them was the aged and valiant Theodoric. The victory leaned to the side of Ætius; and the Huns lost so many of their bravest warriors that they shunned the risk of another engagement, and retreated beyond the Rhine. Neither their ambition, however, nor their resources, were impaired by this reverse. In the ensuing spring, Attila repeated his demands, which being anew rejected by Ætius, he passed the Alps, invaded Italy, and laid siege to

Aquileia. This renowned city was situated on the Adriatic coast, and was reckoned among the richest and most powerful maritime cities of the empire. After a siege of three months it was taken and reduced to a heap of ruins, so that the succeeding generation could scarcely discover its site. It was a true and memorable saying of Attila, that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse trod. Yet this savage destroyer was the unconscious instrument of laying the foundation of a city which subsequently rose, by the magnitude of its trade, to be one of the greatest and most celebrated in Modern Europe. The fugitives from Aquileia fled to the hundred small islands in the Adriatic gulf, which are separated from the main land by a channel about eight miles in breadth. There, to use the words of the Gothic minister, like water-fowl they fixed their nests upon the bosom of the ocean, and there arose the far famed city of *Venice*.

After the destruction of Aquileia, Attila ravaged the plains of Lombardy, and the noble cities with which it was studded fell one by one into his hands; nor did he pause in his career till he had obtained possession of the imperial city of Milan. The emperor Valentinian fled from the impregnable fortress of Ravenna, to the open capital of Rome. Ætius alone was incapable of fear. The barbarians, with whose aid he had won the day at Chalons, refused to march to the relief of Italy. He was obliged therefore to depend upon his domestic troops, with

whom he hung on the rear of Attila, harassed his march, and displayed that true military genius which shines most bright in the darkest extremity. The pusillanimous emperor, seeing little hope of relief, sent a solemn embassy, consisting of his principal ministers, and of Leo, the bishop of Rome, to deprecate the wrath of the barbarian, and humbly to sue for peace. Attila was not indisposed to grant his request; the martial spirit of his troops had become relaxed by their residence in a warmer climate, and disease had thinned their ranks; he therefore agreed to evacuate Italy upon a promise of receiving the princess Honoria. After his retreat, he was one morning found dead in his bed, in his wooden palace beyond the Danube, after a night of debauch; and with him was extinguished the wide spread empire of the Huns.

Attila retired from Italy, and died A. D. 453. The next year, Valentinian, moved by those feelings of envy which belong only to little minds, determined to rid himself of the illustrious Ætius, and taking advantage of a visit which he made at the imperial palace, drew his sword, the first he had ever drawn, and plunged it into the breast of the general who had saved his empire. The feelings of the Romans, which had been hitherto confined within the bounds of contempt, now arose to hatred of their base emperor; and the reply of one whose opinion he had solicited, may shew the public feeling on this occasion. The Roman replied to the emperor, 'I know not your motives

or provocations; I only know that you have acted like a man who cuts off his right hand with his left.' Valentinian now gave himself up to every kind of debauchery, and within a twelve-month after he had murdered Ætius, was himself assassinated by two barbarians.

The difficulties and distresses of Rome now thickened on every side. Britain, Spain, and the greater part of Gaul had been wrested from its dominion. Italy itself was desolated by the barbarians; and the conquest of Africa by Genseric, intercepted those supplies upon which Italy and Rome depended for food. A new and more severe calamity was now at hand. The Vandals, who had conquered Africa, created a fleet, and extended their ravages to the neighbouring coasts; and at length, emboldened by success, determined to plunder Rome itself. Within three months of the death of Valentinian, a fleet sailed out of the port of Carthage to claim the empire of the Mediterranean. Genseric proceeded with his barbarians up the Tiber, and advanced from the port of Ostia to the gates of the defenceless city. Instead of an army to withstand him, he beheld Leo, the bishop of Rome, who in the confusion of the times necessarily engrossed a large share of authority, issuing from the city with a train of bishops in their sacerdotal vestments, and proceeding to his tent, humbly to implore him to save the imperial city. Genseric promised to spare the unresisting multitude, to protect the buildings from fire, and



to exempt the captives from torture ; but it was beyond his power to restrain his barbarians from plunder, with so rich a prize before them. Forty-five years had elapsed since the sack of Rome by Alaric, and the city had recovered its wealth and splendour. That wealth was now swept away. For fourteen days did the troops of Genseric plunder the city of whatever private or public treasures they could discover, and transport them to their ships. The temples of the gods, and the churches of the Christians, equally felt their sacrilegious hands. The sacred vessels of the temple of Jerusalem, which Titus had brought in triumph to Rome, were now transported to Africa ; and thus six centuries after Rome had by an act of surpassing injustice levelled Carthage with the ground, a fleet issuing from that same port, under the command of a barbarian from the shores of the Baltic, proceeded up the Tiber, and brought back to Carthage the plunder of Rome, the spoils of the civilized world.

The final extinction of the western empire of Rome now approached with rapid strides. The Goth, the Hun, and the Vandal had already desolated the luxuriant plains of Italy, and despoiled the Eternal city of its wealth. Its richest provinces had been severed from it ; and the dominion of the emperor was gradually contracted to the narrow limits of Italy. The coasts were incessantly plundered by the Vandal pirates, and there existed no human power which could restore the

vigour or integrity of the state. Valentinian the third, the last of the race of Theodosius, died in 455. During the twenty years which elapsed between that event and the last days of imperial Rome, nine emperors were, by various revolutions, successively raised to the throne. Though this period was adorned with the virtues and valour of Majorian, and distracted by the ambition of Ricimer, the maker of kings, the separate transactions of each emperor are little worthy of record. Augustulus, the last emperor of the West, a youth with no recommendation but his beauty, was the son of Orestes, an inhabitant of Pannonia, who had refused the purple, though he still retained the command of the troops and the first rank in the empire. The barbarians whom the Roman emperors had been obliged to take into pay, owing to the total decay of valour among the Italians, assumed a higher tone of insolence, and obtained an augmentation of pay, on each of the revolutions in these last twenty years. Of Orestes they haughtily demanded *one-third* of the lands of Italy. He rejected their demand, determined rather to brave their vengeance than to subscribe to the ruin of an innocent country. The troops, known under the name of confederates, flocked from all parts of Italy to the standard of Odoacer, of the barbarian tribe of the Heruli, who assured them that under his command they would obtain their demands. Orestes finding it impossible to stem this torrent, took refuge in Pavia, where he

was besieged, taken, and executed, while his son Augustulus was obliged to implore the clemency of Odoacer, who obliged the youth to signify his resignation of the crown to the senate. That barbarian now ascended the throne, and contenting himself with the supreme power in Italy, refused during his reign the outward insignia of royalty. At his instigation, the senate of Rome addressed a letter to the Emperor Zeno at Constantinople, which, as being the last act of a body once the most renowned and powerful in the world, deserves particular record. "They solemnly disclaimed the necessity or even the wish of continuing any longer the imperial succession in Italy; since in their opinion, the majesty of a sole monarch was sufficient to pervade and protect, at the same time the east and the west. In their own name and in the name of the people, they consented that the seat of universal empire should be transferred from Rome to Constantinople; and they renounced the right of choosing their own master. They added that *the republic* might safely confide in the civil and military virtues of Odoacer, and they humbly requested that the emperor would invest him with the title of Patrician, and the administration of the diocese of Italy."

Thus, in the year A. D. 476, the western empire became extinct. The barbarians of the north, against whose irruptions the emperors had incessantly struggled for three centuries, at length achieved their object. This mighty revolution of

the fifth century produced an entire change in the government, manners, laws, science, and arts of Europe. New institutions arose; new languages grew out of the mixture of the Roman tongue, with the languages of the different races; new laws were introduced; and from the rude freedom of the Gothic tribes, we derive that first element of modern civilization and improvement, a representative government.

## SECT. 2.

*Odoacer—Theodoric, the Ostrogoth subdues Italy—his early history—Emigration of his tribe—his virtues—character of the Goths—Boethius—Amalasontha—Theodatus—Invasion of England by the Picts and Scots—and by the Saxons—Hengist and Horsa—Establishment of the Heptarchy—Conversion of the Saxons to Christianity—The Bretweldas—Union of the Seven Kingdoms under Egbert, King of Wessex—Clovis, first King of the Franks—he embraces Christianity—Division of the country among his sons—Vices of the Kings of the Merovingian Dynasty—Pepin Heristel—Charles Martel—the Gothic Kingdom of Spain—Adolphus—Wallia—Euric—Wamba—Theodoric, the last of the Goths—The invasion of Spain by the Mahomedans.*

The Western Empire of Rome, in which the provinces of Europe were comprised, is now broken up and parcelled out among a number of independent sovereigns, all of barbarous origin and character. We now, therefore, enter on the early history of those kingdoms, from which the present monarchies of Christendom were gradually formed. We propose in this Section to describe, in the first instance, the rise and fall of the Gothic

kingdom of Italy; the establishment of the Saxons in Britain, till the kingdoms of the Heptarchy were united under Egbert in 821; the revolutions in France till the reign of Charles Martel, who saved it from the Moosoolmans in 752; and the history of the Gothic kingdom of Spain to the days of Roderic, the last of the Goths, when it was overturned by the Saracens.

Odoacer, as we have already narrated, took possession of the imperial throne, and extinguished the Roman empire in the west. He was the first barbarian king who reigned over Italy; but he was not unworthy of the station to which his valour and talents had raised him. His savage manners were polished by intercourse with the more cultivated Romans; he strictly enforced the existing laws; he indulged in no barbarous innovations. Though he was obliged to give up, according to his promise, one-third of the lands of Italy to the soldiers who had raised him to the throne, he endeavoured to the utmost of his power to restore plenty and security to his new subjects, and to heal the disorders which had turned this once flourishing country almost into a desert. He was not enabled, however, to found a dynasty. After a reign of fourteen years, he was oppressed by the superior genius of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, a hero alike excellent in the arts of war and government, who restored peace and prosperity to Italy.

Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, was born at Vienna, two years after the death of Attila. In his eighth



year he was given as a hostage to Leo, the emperor of Constantinople. In this metropolis of the east, he received his education and was trained in all the exercises of war. He frequented the schools of the learned, but he disdained to imbibe their philosophy, and remained ignorant even of the art of writing. At the age of eighteen he was restored to his father, and soon became the head of his tribe. Various movements, which it is unnecessary to detail, made him and his Ostrogoths anxious for a new settlement. Theodoric, who burned with ardour for some great enterprise worthy of his courage, thus addressed the emperor: "Although your servant is maintained by your liberality, graciously listen to the wishes of my heart. Italy, the inheritance of your predecessors, and Rome itself, the head and mistress of the world are now oppressed by Odoacer. Direct me with my national troops to march against him. If I fall, you will be relieved from a troublesome friend; if I succeed, I will govern in your name and to your glory." The emperor gladly embraced the proposal; and authorized him to proceed to the conquest of Italy. The Goths, with all their property, their wives, and their children, hastened to join the standard of Theodoric. The entire nation, to the number of seven hundred thousand, set forward on this emigration, and marching seven hundred miles in the depth of winter, crossed the Julian Alps in spite of the most appalling obstacles, and unfurled the Gothic banner on the plains

of Italy. Odoacer was overcome in three battles; and the whole of Italy from the Alps to Calabria submitted to Theodoric, with the exception of Ravenna, in which Odoacer had shut himself up. So strong were the fortifications of this city, that he was enabled to sustain a siege of three years. Ravenna at length capitulated, and Odoacer was put to death. The island of Sicily was also voluntarily ceded by the African Vandals to Theodoric, who was accepted as the sovereign of Italy by the senate and people of Rome, and enjoyed the throne during the long period of thirty-three years. No sooner was his authority established than he sheathed the sword, and applied diligently to the arts of peace. His reign was as auspicious as it was long; and he fully redeemed the promise he had made on ascending the throne, that he would so conduct his government as to make it only regret of the people, that they had not come at an earlier period under the sway of the Goths.

Theodoric declined the name and the diadem of an emperor; but he enjoyed the full plenitude of power, under the title of king. The Italians alone were employed in the various branches of civil administration; to the Goths were entrusted the military duties of the state. The ancient jurisprudence of the Romans was preserved without alteration; and no existing institution was subverted by an impatient love of change. Instead of destroying the remnants of antiquity with which Rome and Italy were adorned, he shewed the most

enthusiastic regard for every token of the ancient glories of the empire. Though Theodoric and his Goths, in common with all the northern tribes, professed the Arian creed, he allowed the most ample toleration to all his Catholic subjects. The free intercourse of the provinces by land and water was restored ; the gates of Rome were never closed by night or by day ; and it was expressively said that a purse of gold might safely be left in the fields. Italy had enjoyed no season of such repose and prosperity since the golden days of the Antonines. This description will serve to shew the injustice of that opinion, which associates the name of Goth with every thing that is cruel and barbarous. The Romans gained infinitely by the change of masters ; and the assertion of Voltaire, that besides the erection of monasteries, there is no trace of this age except a confused remembrance of misery and devastation, only shews how much he depended on his imagination for his historical facts. That the Goths were rude, illiterate, and ferocious when they issued from their northern seats, will of course not be questioned ; but their character possessed the germ of many simple and manly virtues ; and in their progress southward, during nearly two centuries, they superadded to these the virtues and refinement of civilization. One of the writers of that age thus contrasts them with the degenerate Romans ; "The Romans universally persecute each other : so much so, that many of them, and these of no low degree,

fy for protection to the enemy. Exposed to barbarian cruelty among the Romans, they seek Roman hospitality among the barbarians." So greatly indeed were the Goths beloved in Italy, that during the severe and desperate struggle with the forces of the East, which we shall soon narrate, no province or district ever voluntarily threw off its allegiance to them.

One only stain is affixed to the memory of Theodoric. In the decline of life he was induced through the arts of his courtiers, to confine Boethius on a suspicion of treason. Boethius was one of his principal ministers of state, a noble philosopher and a most profound scholar, the lustre of whose fame was brightened by the gloom of ignorance in which the age was immersed. In his confinement Boethius wrote his celebrated treatise, "the Consolations of Philosophy," a work of which Cicero and Plato might justly have been proud. He was barbarously put to death by order of the king, together with his father-in-law Symmachus. Theodoric soon awoke, however, to the feelings of humanity; and remorse for the unjust murder of the brightest ornament of the age is supposed to have hastened his dissolution, which happened in the seventy-fourth year of his age, in the year 526.

He had married the sister of Clovis, the founder of the French monarchy, of the illustrious lineage of the *long-haired* Merovingians. From this union sprung Amalasontha, whose son Athalaric became

the heir of the Gothic monarchy. She governed the country during the non-age of her son for nine years. At the age of twenty-eight, which she had attained, when she became regent, the beauties of her mind and her person had reached their maturity. She spoke with equal elegance, the Latin, the Greek and the Gothic languages. To compensate for the injustice of her father, she liberally provided for the children of Boethius and Symmachus; and she continued at the head of her cabinet that accomplished statesman, Cassiodorus, the great historian of the Gothic race. So exemplary were the prudence and vigour of her reign, that both the eastern emperor and the barbaric kings respected the majesty of her throne, while her own subjects almost forgot that Theodoric had ceased to reign. Her son, who gave no promise of treading in the footsteps either of his mother or grandfather, was cut off at the premature age of sixteen, the victim of intemperance. Amalasontha being precluded by the Gothic laws from ascending the throne herself, married her cousin Theodatus, with whom she hoped to share the royal authority. This wretch, however, soon after caused her to be strangled in a bath; and from this period may be dated the downfall of the Goths. Justinian, the emperor of the East, was preparing for the recovery of Italy; and his emissaries actually persuaded Theodatus basely to sign a document, in which, for a pension of forty-eight thousand pounds a-year, he agreed to resign the



sceptre of Italy and retire into private life. While this treaty was on its way to Constantinople, Theodatus passed into the opposite extreme of temerity, and determined to meet Belisarius sword in hand. The next year 537, that renowned general entered upon his Italian campaign, and through him was the Gothic monarchy extinguished. The events of this war will be narrated in the life of Justinian.

We now resume the thread of English History. When the Romans were constrained, about the beginning of the fifth century, to withdraw their garrisons from England, the Picts and Scots poured down from Scotland on the defenceless provinces. Of the Picts the origin is lost; some suppose them to have been of Scandinavian origin; while others describe them as the remnant of the ancient Britons, who retired before the Romans to the inaccessible mountains of Scotland. The Scots, the ancestors of the present lowland inhabitants of Scotland, came over from Ireland and settled in that country. In their depredations on England, these two tribes were aided by the Saxons, a nation of pirates who resided on the coast of the Continent, opposite to England, from the Rhine to the Baltic. By these three races was England laid waste for the forty years preceding the year 449. Vortigern appears at this time to have enjoyed paramount authority in England, and is said to have called in the Saxon pirates to assist him in repelling the Picts and Scots; and Hengist and Horsa are represented as having come over on

the strength of this invitation. But it is rather a far fetched conjecture that Vortigern would have invited into England, these 'dragons of Germany,' as the poets call them, to assist in repelling the Picts and Scots, whom they had hitherto joined in plundering the island. A more probable supposition is, that these two Scandinavian chiefs came over upon a marauding expedition, and were induced to remain, not through the entreaties, but through the weakness of the English. They landed in 449; and from this date commences the Saxon dominion in England, of which neither the lapse of fourteen centuries, nor the progress of civilization has been able to efface the traces. Of the old Britons nothing remains at this day but legendary tales; of the Roman institutions, we have few or no vestiges; but the Saxons imprinted their own character so deeply on our language, laws, literature and institutions, that it is distinctly visible even at the present day. From these Saxon chiefs, who traced their descent from Odin, the fabulous god of war, the links of unbroken succession have been continued, in the female line, to our present queen Victoria.

The tribes known under the common appellation of Saxons, who now flocked to England, consisted of Jutes from the island of Jutland, of Angles from Holstein, both of which are now under the crown of Denmark, and of Saxons, from Friesland, now incorporated with Holland; but they all sprung from the same stock, and spoke the same

language. Hengist and Horsa, if they came to the assistance of Vortigern, soon became his masters, and wrested from him the province of Kent, which is at this day more Saxon than any other part of England. New swarms of barbarians poured into the country ; and the unhappy natives, utterly unable to stem this torrent, were obliged to take refuge in Wales, and along the line of the Western coast, from the Land's end to the confines of Scotland ; while some of them fled into France, and occupied a maritime province, which from them was called Brittany. Yet the conquest was not achieved at once ; nor did the Britons succumb without the noblest struggles. It was fifty years after the landing of Hengist and Horsa, that the kingdom of Sussex was established by the Saxons ; and fourscore years before the west of England, which was valiantly defended by Arthur, (as is supposed,) was subdued, and formed into the kingdom of Wessex. The conquest of the country north of the Humber and south of the Tweed was achieved, about a hundred years after the first arrival of these strangers, by Ida, who founded the kingdom of Northumberland. About 597, nearly a century and a half after the first invasion, the Angles came over and subdued the countries now known as Norfolk and Suffolk. In this manner were formed the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in England, which though they amounted to more than seven, have generally been denominated by historians the Heptarchy. The first

period of the Saxon dominion was one of anarchy and misery. The light of knowledge which the Romans had diffused through the land was extinguished, and barbarism regained her ancient seat in England ; the royal palaces were filled with violence and bloodshed ; and the mutual wars in which the kings of the different provinces were constantly engaged, spread misery and desolation from one end of the country to the other.

The Saxons were heathens, and worshipped as deities the Sun, the Moon, Tuisko, Odin, Thor, Friga and Sater ; from whom the English days of the week continue to be called. In this heathenish state they remained for nearly a hundred and fifty years after their first arrival. The introduction of Christianity arose from the barbarous condition of the country. Strange as it may seem to the natives of India, who have never known the English but as a mighty and invincible people, it is a fact, that at the time of which we now write, they were in so degraded a state, that they furnished slaves to the rest of Europe. About the year 588, some fine looking English children were exposed for sale in the market at Rome, and attracted the attention of the Pope, who enquired whence they came. Finding that they were pagans from England, he determined to embrace the first opportunity of attempting the conversion of their countrymen ; and about the year 600, he despatched Augustin as a Missionary to England with forty others. He landed in Kent, which was at that

time governed by Ethelbert, who had married Bertha, the daughter of Charibert, king of Paris. She was a Christian, and by her interposition a deserted church in the neighbourhood of the palace was allotted to Augustin. The king listened to his preaching at first with incredulity ; but he gradually became a convert to the truth, and his people following the royal example, threw away Thor and Odin, and were baptized into the Christian faith. The king bestowed many and rich lands on Augustin, who built upon the site on which now stands the Cathedral of Canterbury, the first Christian temple erected among the Anglo-Saxons.

Christianity speedily spread through the countries south of the Humber, but it did not reach Northumberland till after the death of Augustin, in 627. In that year Edwin, king of that state, after having long listened to the preaching of the Missionary Paulinus, convened an assembly of his nobles and councillors, and asked their views regarding the adoption of the Christian faith. Coifi, the high priest of the heathen gods, first delivered his opinion. He acknowledged that he had no faith in his idols, which could neither reward the good nor punish the evil doer, and that he was ready to adopt any better doctrine that could be taught. The nobles delivered their opinions to the same effect, and the whole assembly having agreed to renounce their idols, Coifi set the example by destroying the idols with his own hand,



and beginning the demolition of the temples. Baptism, says the historian, was then performed by immersion, and so general and fervent was the zeal of the northmen, that Paulinus was employed thirty-six days from morning to evening in baptizing the eager multitude.

Of the various kings of Britain, no one ever enjoyed undisputed supremacy. Those sovereigns, however, who from time to time acquired paramount power, were called *Bretwaldas*, wielders of Britain, a title of supremacy which was bestowed on one, and another as he raised himself above his compeers. The wars of the petty kings of England during the Heptarchy are justly ranked by the immortal Milton, as of equal importance with those of the kites and crows. We pass them over in silence, and content ourselves with noticing that in the year 828, that is, fourteen years after the death of Charlemagne, Egbert, king of Wessex, having overcome all his competitors became fully established as the Eighth Bretwalda, or supreme governor of Britain; and though there did not want in his time, or in that of his successors, other chiefs who claimed independent authority, yet historians have agreed to consider the royal Anglo-Saxon line as established in his family from this time and onward for more than two hundred years, till the Saxons were supplanted by the Normans.

The history of the Franks or French begins with the year 481; for the legends of Pharamond

Charles, however, whose prowess procured him the epithet of *Martel* or the Hammer, forced his way to the office and power which his father had enjoyed, triumphed over the various neighbouring sovereigns, and in 732 met and defeated the Moosulmans on the plains of Poitiers. Here we quit the history of France to glance at that of Spain.

We have already mentioned that Adolphus, the successor of Alaric, the Visigoth, obtained from the Roman emperor a grant of the provinces in southern France, on condition of his subduing the barbarians who had broken through the barrier of the Pyrennees, and established themselves in Spain. Adolphus as well as his successor Sigeric was murdered; Wallia, who was elected to the vacant throne, completely overcame the Vandals and the Alans, but the Suevi placed themselves under the protection of Rome. The victor was rewarded with a large portion of territory in France. William made Toulouse his metropolis, and though the Goths considered themselves the rightful sovereigns of Spain, the real sovereignty rested with the Suevi and the Vandals. Wallia died two years after his triumph; and his successors for nearly fifty years appear to have contented themselves with their acquisitions in France. Spain was during this period in the most miserable condition. The various tribes of barbarians traversed it in every direction, and left everywhere the tokens of their savage fury. The Spaniard was the prey

of all parties ; ' his labour was doomed to support the innumerable swarms which spread from the Pyrennees to the rock at Calpe, and which like so many locusts, destroyed wherever they settled.

Euric ascended the Gothic throne in the year 466, and applied vigorously to the conquest of Spain. His arms were eminently successful, and no enemy was able to make head against him. He so completely subdued the Suevi, who enjoyed paramount authority in Spain, that during a whole century they remained in quiet submission to his successors. The six kings who preceded him were rulers in Gaul, not of Spain ; they possessed no authority in it but when their armies took the field. The Peninsula was overrun by them, but could not be said to have been subdued. Euric was the real founder of the Gothic monarchy in Spain, as the extinction of the Roman sway and the subjugation of the Suevi left him without a rival. He was also the first legislator. He collected and committed to writing a body of laws, which continued long to be in force. He was in every respect a great prince. Having thus established a firm dominion in Spain he fixed his capital at Arles, where after a prosperous reign he died in 483. It was not, however, till nearly forty years after this time, in the year 522, that Amalaric, one of his successors, fixed his capital at Seville in Spain. To trace the events which happened in the reigns of his successors for more than a hundred and fifty years we have no space.

The internal wars and the succession of the Gothic sovereigns of Spain are quite as tedious and uninteresting as those of the Merovingian kings of France, or the Saxon kings of England. We pass over therefore in silence a long detail of treachery, violence, and devastation, and touch only the reign of the illustrious Wamba, who ascended the throne A. D. 673. His character was formed of incorruptible integrity, an ardent zeal for his country's good, and a rare union of moderation and firmness. His reign, which was too short for the welfare of his subjects, was remarkable from this one circumstance, that he foresaw with a prophetic eye that the fanatic ambition of the Mahomedans, who had overrun the coast of Africa fronting that of Spain, would sooner or later lead them to his dominions; and he prepared a fleet to repel their incursions.

His foresight was not erroneous. In 677, a Mahomedan fleet of no inconsiderable size appeared off the coast, but the troops who attempted to land were effectually repelled by Wamba's efforts. No farther attempt was made by them during his reign; and if he had been succeeded by monarchs of equal energy and talent, the scourge of Moosulman domination might have been effectually averted. But after he had been deprived of his throne by an act of base treason, his successors, forgetting that the black cloud of the Saracens still hovered around them, busied themselves only in low intrigue, and almost invited over the Mahomedans by their weakness and their vices. In 701

Witiza ascended the throne; but the events of this period are so wrapped in fable that it is difficult to fix upon what we are to believe and what to reject. He is described by historians, who seem to have no other foundation for their facts than remote tradition, as a monster deformed with every vice. All that we certainly know is that he was succeeded by Roderic the last of the Goths, who ascended the Spanish throne in 709. But the events of his reign are veiled in the same obscurity as those of his predecessor. The romantic legends would lead us to conclude, that he seduced the daughter of Count Julian, the governor of the Gothic possessions in Africa, who in revenge for this insult invited the Moors to cross over from Africa and invade Spain. These fictions have been so embellished by the noblest strains of poetry, that we dismiss them from the data of history with no small reluctance. 'Through this cloud of darkness and doubt, some events are faintly visible, which may be admitted as facts. It appears certain that Roderic owed his crown to a party which rose against Witiza; that the dethroned monarch was blinded and driven into exile; that the two sons of Witiza with their relations, Count Julian and Oppas, the archbishop, still kept alive the embers of civil strife; and that finding they were unable to contend any longer with the victorious king Roderic, they resolved to call in the Arabs, with the design not of delivering the country to those infidels, but of humbling the pride of Ro-



deric, and of replacing him by one of the sons of the late monarch.' The generals of the Caliph had long looked with an eager eye on the fair provinces of Spain, and were delighted to hear of the deadly feuds which seemed to open to them the path of invasion. How the Moosulmans landed in Spain, on the 30th of April, 711, how they subverted the Gothic throne in a single battle, and how they established a Saracen Government in Europe, we shall hereafter relate.—We now turn to the events in the Eastern empire.

## SECT. 3.

*The Eastern Empire—Arcadius—Theodosius the Second—Pulcheria—Marcian—Justinian—Belisarius conquers Africa—He lands in Italy and takes Rome—Rome is besieged by the Goths—The Franks invade Italy—Belisarius subverts the Gothic Kingdom of Italy—Belisarius is recalled and sent into Persia—Totila, the Goth reconquers Italy—Belisarius is sent to Italy and recalled—Narses defeats Totila—Death of Belisarius—The Code of Justinian—Introduction of Silk into Europe—Death of Justinian—Narses invites the Lombards into Italy—State of Rome—Chosroes and Heraclius.*

Arcadius, to whom his father Theodosius had given the eastern division of the empire, ascended the throne of Constantinople A. D. 395. His dominions were bounded on one side by the Adriatic Sea, on the other by the river Tigris; on the north by the wilds of Scythia; and on the south by the burning plains of Ethiopia. Within these limits the arts, sciences and literature continued to flourish, though with diminished lustre, while

they became extinct in the western empire through the inroads of the barbarians. The Court language at Constantinople was Greek; from which circumstances this empire in the lapse of time came to be designated as the Greek empire. The character of Arcadius is well described by the great satirist of that age, as resembling that of the simple and harmless animals who scarcely feel that they are the property of their shepherd. After the fall of his first minister Rufinus, he was governed for several years by the eunuch Eutropius, a man whose avarice and insolence made him generally detested, and who fell at length through the contrivances of the empress Euxodia. She was a young and beautiful woman, who despised her husband, indulged in her own passions and partialities, and shewed herself the implacable foe of the sincere but rough Chrysostom, the patriarch of Constantinople, one of the venerable fathers of the church, renowned as much for his learning as for his misfortunes. Arcadius died in the thirteenth year of his reign, of which the only distinguished circumstance is that by his will he bequeathed the guardianship of his son Theodosius, to Yezdegerd, the king of Persia, the hereditary enemy of the Roman emperors. The unanimity of Arcadius, however, was not misplaced; the trust was discharged with scrupulous fidelity, and the Persian monarch protected the eastern empire during the minority of his ward. Theodosius called the *Second*, filled the eastern

throne nearly forty years, from 414 to 453, but the administration during this long period was exclusively in the hands of his sister Pulcheria, his senior by two years. She alone of all the descendants of the great Theodosius appears to have possessed any portion of his spirit or abilities. While her brother amused himself with idle games, or in the transcription of religious treatises, she conducted the government with singular firmness and discretion. Through her agency Theodosius, was married to Eudocia, an Athenian maiden of ignoble birth, but of uncommon beauty. The emperor, however, had not character enough to render any woman happy; the connection became mutually irksome, and the empress finally retired to Jerusalem and closed her days in a religious house. The monotony of Theodosius's reign was broken, first by a war with the Persians, which terminated in a truce for a hundred years, and in the partition of Armenia between the two belligerents; and secondly, by the irruptions of Attila, whose vengeance the emperor was obliged to appease by the cession of a long tract of territory south of the Danube and a disgraceful tribute. Theodosius was the first emperor who caused the Roman laws to be digested into a code; a circumstance which would probably have immortalized his reign, if the superior code of Justinian had not cast it into the shade within a hundred years.

On the death of Theodosius, his sister Pulcheria was proclaimed empress of the west, and though

in the winter of life, married a senator, Marcian, a man in every respect worthy of her choice and of the throne. He refused to pay the annual tribute to Attila, which brought down his hordes of barbarians on the south, and led to the battle of Chalons, which has been already mentioned. Marcian was succeeded in 457 by Leo, and in succession by Zeno, Anastatius, and Justin. The reigns of these four emperors extend to the year 527, and present nothing worthy of detaining the attention of the reader. A more important era now opens. In the year last mentioned, Justinian ascended the throne of Constantinople. From his elevation to his death he governed the state rather more than thirty-eight years ; and his reign was rendered illustrious, not by any intrinsic virtue or ability which he possessed, but by the surpassing talents of the men whom he employed in the offices of state, of whom three have acquired a pre-eminent reputation, Belisarius, Narses and Tribonian.

The military events of Justinian's reign derive their chief lustre from the merits of Belisarius, whom however the emperor constantly treated with mistrust and injustice. Belisarius, though born and trained up among the Dacian peasants, was fully equal in military talents, and statesmanship, to the most renowned generals of ancient Rome. He was at first employed in the Persian war, in which Justinian engaged two years after he ascended the throne, and in which Belisarius ac-

quired such renown, that, when in the sixth year of the emperor's reign it was determined to attempt the reconquest of Africa, he was selected to command the expedition. The preparations for this enterprise were not unworthy of the last contest between the Roman empire and Carthage. Five thousand horse and ten thousand foot were embarked in six hundred vessels, in the harbour of Constantinople, and after a voyage of three months, retarded by various impediments, landed on the shores of Africa. This province had now been separated from the empire for nearly a hundred years; and the Vandals, who originally achieved its conquest, had multiplied from fifty thousand to thrice that number; but ease and prosperity, combined with the warmth of the climate, had relaxed their hardy virtue; and when the two armies met about ten miles from Carthage, Belisarius obtained a complete victory. Carthage immediately opened her gates to him; and Gelimer, the Vandal king fled to Bulla, where he collected some of the wild Moorish troops, and having invited back his brother Zano, who had been employed in the meanwhile in the conquest of Sardinia, prepared for the final struggle. His usual success attended the arms of Belisarius; the Vandals were defeated and fled; and thus in the short space of three months, was the entire conquest of Africa achieved. Belisarius returned to Constantinople, and was honoured with a triumph, the first which had ever been witnessed in that city. Among the most remarkable of



the spoils which he brought with him, were the sacred vessels of the Jewish temple, which had been transported by Titus from Jerusalem to Rome, and by Genseric from Rome to Carthage. They were now sent back to Jerusalem with much devout pomp by Justinian, and deposited in the Christian's Cathedral which had been erected by the superstitious Helena.

The emperor had no sooner recovered the province of Africa, than he aspired to the conquest of Italy, which had been occupied by the Goths for more than sixty years. On this service he deputed the hero who had won his laurels in the mountains of Persia, and on the plains of Africa. In the first year of this, which is usually denominated the Gothic war, Belisarius reduced the island of Sicily; and the next year, A. D. 537, landing in the south of Italy, he besieged and took Naples. The forces of the Goths were at that time dispersed abroad in the north, and Belisarius therefore pushed on to Rome, and entered the city without opposition. The Goths alarmed at his progress, deposed the bastardly Theodatus, and elevated Vitiges to the command, who immediately advanced with a hundred and fifty thousand men, and sat down before the eternal city. Great as was the military reputation of Belisarius, no single event in his long and brilliant military career reflected greater credit on him than his defence of Rome. With only five thousand men he defended for more than a year, against an overwhelming force of 150,000, a

city which embraced a circle of twelve miles. On one occasion the enemy made a general assault on all the fortifications of the city : and if a single post had given way, Rome and Italy would probably have been lost to Justinian. Belisarius maintained the contest from morning to night, and repelled the enemy at every point. The Goths, finding it impossible to capture the city, and having already lost the greater part of their forces either in the daily combats near the walls, or by the malaria of the country, at length raised the siege, burned their tents, and retreated first to Ramini, and then to the bulwarks of Ravenna. During this period, the Franks, anxious to turn the confusion of Italy to their own benefit, entered Italy by the Alps under the guidance of the grandson of Clovis. In the first campaign they took and destroyed Milan, second in dignity only to Rome; and the next year they desolated the plains of the Po in the face both of a Roman and a Gothic army; but a pestilence crept into their camp, and obliged them to return with nothing but their plunder.

Belisarius was no sooner delivered from this new foe than he laid siege to Ravenna; which he took in December 539, and completed the reduction of the Gothic kingdom of Italy. Thus, as his historian remarks, "Victory by sea and land attended his arms. He subdued Africa, Italy, and the adjacent islands, led away captives, the successors of Genseric the Vandal, and Theodoric the Goth; filled Constantinople with the spoils of

their palaces, and in the space of six years recovered half the provinces of the western empire." That the glory of these exploits belongs to the personal character of Belisarius, is abundantly proved by the calamities which followed his departure from Italy and Africa. Of the reaction in Italy we shall shortly speak. In Africa, the officers appointed after his departure practised such rapacity and cruelty as to occasion frequent revolts, and inconceivable misery. The province continued, it is true, annexed to the eastern empire for more than a century after this time; but it was no longer the rich and populous country which Belisarius had left it. Misgovernment converted it into a dreary solitude. Under the sway of Justinian and his successors it withered away, and relapsed into barbarism; and from that day to the present it has never been able to recover its rank among the nations.

Justinian feared his own victorious general more than his enemies. Belisarius had scarcely humbled the Goths in Italy before he was recalled to Constantinople by his master with all the haste of jealousy, and despatched to the east a second time, to repress the inroads of the great Nushirvan, or Chosroes, king of Persia, one of the most illustrious monarchs of the Sassanian dynasty. He reigned over Persia for forty-eight years, from A. D. 531 to 579, and is to this day the theme of praise among the historians of the East for his justice. Eminent as he was in every royal endow-

ment, that which associates his name with the country in which we write, is the fact of his having sent his physician to the banks of the Ganges to obtain a copy of the Heetopadesh, the fame of which had extended to the Court of Persia. The work was obtained and translated into Persian, and from that language, or more probably from the Arabic, was transfused into the languages of Europe, under the title of "the Fables of Pilpay." It was during his reign, and possibly the messenger who brought the Heetopadesh, that the game of chess, which had been invented in the east to teach kings that they are strong only in the strength of their subjects, was introduced from India into Persia, and subsequently diffused through Europe. In the year 540, Nushirvan invaded the Roman province of Syria, and took Antioch, the queen of the east, as the city was called, and carried her noblest citizens into captivity. Elated with this success, he began to think the conquest of Constantinople within his reach; but his visions of empire were soon broken. Belisarius was sent against him at the head of an army; and though it was without pay or discipline, he took up so commanding a position on the banks of the Euphrates, as completely to overawe the Persian monarch by the incomparable disposition of his troops, and to induce him to adopt the safe course of a precipitate retreat.

The abrupt departure of Belisarius from Italy revived the courage of the Goths. Totila, the ne-

phew of their late sovereign, a successor worthy of a throne which had been filled by Theodoric and Amalasontha, was raised to the supreme authority, and undertook to restore the Gothic kingdom of Italy, though he could muster but five thousand troops, in lieu of the two hundred thousand who had formerly marched under the Gothic standard. He passed the Po, traversed the Appenines, and sweeping down the whole length of Italy besieged and took Naples; and having received the submission of the southern provinces, moved up to the banks of the Tiber, and laid siege to Rome. His rapid success was owing as much to his own virtues, as to the reaction of feeling among the Romans regarding the emperor Justinian. Three years of suffering under his ministers had given them a very clear idea of what they might expect under his government; and the whole country looked with anxiety for the restoration of the Gothic power. While Totila besieged Rome, Belisarius, who had been re-appointed to the command of the troops in Italy upon this emergency, entered the Tiber with a fleet and army, in the equipment of which Justinian had displayed his usual meanness; for it was totally inadequate to the task of relieving the capital. On one occasion, indeed, the amazing genius of Belisarius had almost succeeded in throwing succours into Rome, but his plans were defeated by the treachery of his subordinate generals. Rome fell into the hands of the Goths, A. D. 546;



and Totila, forgetting what was due to his own character, demolished one-third of the walls, and employed fire and engines to destroy the most stately monuments of antiquity. He even went so far in his wrath as to declare that the eternal city should be burned into a pasture for cattle; but Belisarius sent to entreat that he would spare those edifices which were the glory of the dead, and the delight of the living; and at his solicitation, the Goth consented to leave Rome standing. After having captured the city, Totila departed for new conquests, and Belisarius by one of the most daring exploits recorded in history, with the assistance of only a thousand horse, recovered it for Justinian. Had the emperor seconded his general with any succours of men or money, Italy would probably have been wrested a second time from the Goths; but Justinian denied him both, and coolly allowed him to wander through Italy, more like a fugitive than a conqueror. Yet in the opinion of those whose judgment of military affairs is of value, he appeared a more consummate general in this melancholy campaign, than when he led two kings captive to the throne of his master. He was at length recalled, and Rome almost immediately fell into the hands of Totila, who being now delivered from the fear of the only man whom he dreaded, proceeded to the conquest of the rest of Italy, to which he subsequently added Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia; and he even ventured with his victorious fleet to insult the coasts of Greece.

Justinian now prepared for the war in earnest, and in the year A. D. 552, appointed Narses, an eunuch of his palace, to command the expedition which he prepared for the re-conquest of Italy. Narses, notwithstanding his unfortunate condition and his ignoble employment, possessed the soul of a hero and the wisdom of a statesman. A large army and great resources, though they had been denied to Belisarius were placed at his disposal; and he proceeded with expedition to march along the northern coast of Italy. At Rimini, he came up with the heroic Totila, and in July of that same year, a bloody battle was fought in which the eunuch was victorious. The Goths not only lost the day, but also their gallant monarch, who perished after having performed every duty of a great general. Narses pushed on to Rome, which he took, and presented the keys to Justinian, in whose reign this city, once the terror of the world, had been five times taken and retaken. Of the senators who had been banished by Totila, many were restored: but the ancient character of that illustrious assembly was irretrievably lost, and from this period we fix the date of its final extinction, thirteen centuries after it had been instituted by Romulus. The Gothic kingdom was also extinct; Italy was annexed to the eastern empire, and governed by a chief who was appointed from Constantinople, and who, from his residence at Ravenna, was called the Exarch of Ravenna. Narses was the first Exarch, and governed Italy thir-

teen years. Rome was degraded to the second rank.

In the year 559 the Bulgarians, another tribe of the northern barbarians, taking advantage of the freezing of the Danube, crossed that river, and spreading desolation around them, marched against Constantinople. Justinian trembled on his throne; the citizens prepared to leave the city; but the eyes of both were fixed upon the old veteran Belisarius, who had long pined in neglect and disgrace. He resumed his armour, placed himself at the head of his troops, and marched against the enemy, whom he easily put to flight, and thus relieved the metropolis of the east. Justinian barely acknowledged his services, and shortly after crowned a long life of injustice and envy towards his most exalted subject, by despoiling him of all his property and confining him to his own house, on an idle rumour that he had intended to attempt his life. Had Belisarius ever cherished such a thought, ample means had been frequently afforded him, when at the head of a victorious army, of making himself master of the empire. He died in disgrace in 565: and his unworthy lord paid the debt of nature a few months after, as little regretted in death, as he had been beloved during his life; while the name of Belisarius, not only acquires fresh lustre with the lapse of time, but serves to keep buoyant the memory of his ungrateful master.

However brilliant may have been the military

glories of Justinian's reign through the exploits of Belisarius and Narses, they are eclipsed, in the judgment of posterity, by the more solid and lasting benefit conferred on mankind, in the legal reforms which were completed under the auspices of this emperor; though in his peaceful reforms, he had as little personal share as in the military triumphs of his generals. The conquests of Belisarius were lost in subsequent revolutions, and mankind reaped no permanent advantage from them; but the principles of the *Code* of Justinian have exercised a silent and beneficial influence on Europe; and many of the most equitable provisions of European law may be traced up to the legislative labours of Justinian's reign. The laws of the Roman empire had, as might have been expected, swelled in the course of thirteen centuries to several thousand volumes, which no fortune could purchase and no capacity could digest. Justinian, anxious to reduce them into one short, clear, intelligible code, fixed upon Tribonian, the greatest civilian of that age, to superintend the work. He and his learned associates, arranged this confused mass of conflicting statutes in a uniform and consistent body of laws, which, under the title of the *Pandects*, the *Code*, and the *Institutes*, received the final sanction of the emperor, and superseded all existing rules. That extraordinary civilian, who, for compass and reach of mind, and for variety of attainments, stands on the same elevation with Bacon, completed this great task with the aid

of seventeen associates, in a little more than four years. Strange to say, Tribonian was an idolater, and this body of laws, though compiled at Constantinople, was written in the Latin language. It was the most permanent and useful monument of Justinian's reign.

We must not pass over, even in this hasty sketch, the memorable introduction of the silk-worm into Europe, during this reign. Silk, which was then the produce only of China, had, with the progress of luxury, become an article of indispensable necessity in the Roman empire, the wealth of which was drained to supply funds for its purchase. Two Persian monks who had long resided in China, and viewed with astonishment the process of rearing the little animal, determined, if possible, to transplant it into Christendom. They concealed some of the eggs in a bamboo, and traversing the whole extent of Asia arrived with their hidden treasure at Constantinople. The eggs were artificially hatched, the caterpillars were carefully fed with mulberry leaves, and from this parent stock have been propagated the silk-worms which now exist in France and Italy, constitute so essential a portion of the wealth of those countries, and afford the means of subsistence to so many thousands of the agriculturists, manufacturers, and merchants of Europe.

Justinian was succeeded by his nephew Justin, A. D. 565. The next year, the Lombards, who now for the first time appear on the page of his-



tory, a Scandinavian tribe, combining with the barbarous Avars, destroyed the kingdom of Gepidæ, who had formed in a measure the bulwark of the empire in the north. The accession of Justin to the throne was fatal to Narses, the Exarch of Ravenna. His government was sullied with avarice; and wherever avarice predominates in the supreme authority, the administration of the deputies, through every grade of office, is invariably marked with oppression. It is said that the deputies of Rome approached the throne of the new emperor, and frankly told him that the government of the Goths was infinitely preferable to that of the Greeks. The empress Sophia, who possessed no little authority over her weak husband, issued an order for the recall of Narses, in which she wantonly added insult to injury; for Narses with all his faults was perhaps the most consummate statesman of the age; and certainly no one in the degenerate Court of Constantinople could stand the most distant comparison with him. To this man the empress directed a letter to be written, commanding him to leave to *men* the cares of government, and to return to his station among the women of the palace, and resume the distaff. In the indignation of conscious superiority, Narses is said to have exclaimed, 'I will spin her such a thread as she shall not be able to unravel.' Instead of proceeding in the garb of a slave to Constantinople, he invited the Lombards into Italy. Their young and vigorous monarch Alboin, charmed with the call, descended from the Alps, subdued the

plains of the Po, which from that time to the present have retained the name of Lombardy, and gradually overran Italy, which was thus anew wrested from the eastern empire. A very small and contemptible portion of territory still continued to obey the deputy of the emperor, the Exarch of Ravenna.

The reader will naturally enquire after the condition of Rome, amidst these convulsions ; the reply is melancholy. At the close of the sixth century, this city, once the metropolis of the western world, from whose gates in the days of its glory messengers issued day and night to convey its mandates to the mountains of Scotland and the plains of the Euphrates, to the banks of the Danube and the border of the great African desert, had now reached the lowest state of depression. " By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of private and public opulence were exhausted ; the lofty tree, under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground." From this depression the city now began to rise under the influence of the Bishop of Rome, who already aspired to establish a spiritual dominion as wide and despotic as the temporal dominion the old Romans had enjoyed. In the general confusion of the times Rome was abandoned to neglect, and the Bishop, the most influential man in it, from his ecclesiastical authority,

imperceptibly took upon himself the direction of civil affairs. It was at this juncture that Gregory was elected Bishop of Rome, the ablest man who ever filled that office ; and Rome, although no longer the resort of ambassadors and suppliant ministers from the various parts of the world, began to assume the character of a spiritual metropolis, and to attract pilgrims from all directions to the shrine of the apostles.

Italy, as we have just shewn, was during the reign of Justin separated from the empire, and erected by the Lombards into a kingdom. Of the successors of Justinian for a period of forty-five years, from 565 to 610, there is nothing worthy of record. Passing over this dark and uninteresting period, we come at once to that of Heraclius, who ascending the throne in this latter year, reigned forty-two years. His reign in the beginning, and at the close, was as ignoble as in the middle it was illustrious. It is distinguished in history for the last of those struggles between the two empires of Persia and Rome, which had continued from the days of Crassus for more than six centuries, and in which at an immense sacrifice of life, the efforts of the rival emperors were directed, the one to extend his dominions beyond the Tigris, the other beyond the Euphrates. Chosroes, the last of a line of renowned and valiant monarchs, was now on the throne of Persia. It was during his reign that the glory of his dynasty reached the highest point of admiration, just before it was

quenched for ever by the irruption of the Mahomedans. The year after Heraclius ascended the throne of Constantinople, Chosroes passed the long disputed boundary of the Euphrates, conquered Syria, and overran Palestine. The holy city of Jerusalem, which he took by assault, was despoiled anew of the sacred vessels, and of all the wealth which had been accumulated in it by the votive offerings of three centuries of piety or superstition. Ninety thousand Christians were put to the sword, within its walls. From Palestine, Chosroes pursued the usual route of conquest, and proceeded to the subjugation of Egypt. From Egypt he moved upon Asia Minor, which submitted to him; and in the short period of six years, the eastern empire was stripped of its fairest provinces. The wonders related of his magnificence partake too much of the nature of oriental fiction to obtain a place in sober history; but his power was undoubtedly real, his greatness solid, and it seemed as if nothing could prevent the annexation of the eastern empire to the sceptre of Persia. In the midst of all this actual glory, and of the still more splendid prospects which lay before him, the great Chosroes received a letter from the son of an obscure merchant at Mecca, commanding him to acknowledge Mahomed as the prophet of God. The monarch rejected the message of the unknown individual with disdain, and tore the epistle. This letter was from Mahomed, who had just at this time laid the foundations of the Mosulman creed and con-

quests; and who exclaimed, on hearing of the fate of his letter. Thus will God reject the supplications, and rend the empire of Chosroes.

But while Chosroes despoiled Heraclius of his eastern provinces, the Avars, a Scythian tribe which had gradually risen in power and importance, tore from him the European provinces of his empire, and almost entered the gates of Constantinople. Heraclius, pressed on all sides with difficulties which appeared insurmountable, was preparing to abandon the capital, and retire to Carthage, when the Patriarch of Constantinople aroused him to a sense of duty. Suddenly did the emperor, who for twelve years had wallowed in luxury and pleasure, while the empire was dismembered on every side, appear on the stage a hero of the first rank; and he conducted the war during six years with such marvellous skill, as to place himself on a level with the greatest commanders of any age. When he had repelled all his enemies he sunk back into indolence;—thus, as the great historian happily express it, the mists of the morning and evening were separated by the brightness of his meridian sun. We have no space for the marches and countermarches of Heraclius; suffice it to say, that he took the field in person, and carried the war with such vigour into the dominions of his enemy as to oblige him to recall his troops. While Heraclius was engaged in Persia, the Avars, with whom Chosroes formed an alliance, and one of whose armies had formed a junction with them,



laid siege to Constantinople. The besieged seemed to have imbibed the spirit of their emperor ; and the besiegers were repulsed with loss. To counterbalance this alliance, Heraclius formed a junction with the Turks, a people destined after the lapse of eight centuries to take Constantinople, and extinguish the Roman empire. Partly through their aid, but chiefly through his own uncommon skill and activity, he defeated all the plans of Chosroes, and re-conquered all the provinces which he had lost, together with the so-called wood of the true cross which the Persians had sacrilegiously taken away from Jerusalem. Chosroes was chased through his own dominions ; and this once mighty monarch, deserted in his extremity by all his subjects, after having seen eighteen of his sons put to death before his eyes, was thrown into a dungeon where he expired. A treaty of peace, by which the conquered provinces were restored, was soon after concluded between his successor and Heraclius, who, after an absence of six years returned, covered with glory, to Constantinople. While he was employed in celebrating his triumph, he heard that an insignificant village on the confines of Syria had been pillaged by a new and unknown tribe of Saracens. This was the first conquest of the Mahomedans beyond the boundary of Arabia, and though the circumstance was in itself insignificant, it acquires importance as the prelude of that mighty revolution which was to establish in so many regions a new government,

a new religion, new laws, and new institutions. In the last eight years of his reign Heraclius lost to the Saracens, or the followers of Mahomed, the same provinces which he had gained from the Persians.

#### SECT. 4.

*Contrast between the invasion of the Northern Nations and the Moosulmans—Birth and early History of Mahomed—He gives himself out as a Prophet—Chief Doctrines of the Mahomedan Creed—Persecution and flight of Mahomed to Medina—Progress of his Religion—His Death—Succession of Abubeker—Conquest of Syria—Appointment of Omar as Caliph—Conquest of Jerusalem—Conquest of Persia—Conquest of Egypt—Attempt to conquer Africa—Alexandrian Library—Othman—Ali—Contest between him and Moawiyah—Murder of Ali—Establishment of the Omniade Dynasty—The Shiites and Sonmites—Murder of Hossein—The two sieges of Constantinople—Subjugation of Africa—Tarik and Musa conquer Spain—Death of Roderic—Attempt of the Mahomedans to conquer Europe—Battle of Poitiers—Defeat of the Mahomedans—The extent of their Empire—The Abassides—Revolt of Spain.*

The current of events now brings us to one of the most singular and momentous events in modern history ; to a revolution, more disastrous in its progress to the general welfare of the human race than any other on record ;—the rise and progress of Mahomedanism. The irruption of the ignorant and ferocious savages of the north of

Europe, who swept away almost every vestige of existing civilization, was at the time most calamitous, but their descendants have applied to the arts and sciences, and under the benign influence of Christianity, have made such progress in all the paths of knowledge as completely to cast into the shade, the highest attainments which the Romans ever acquired. The Mahomedans, who issued from Arabia, two centuries after these northern irruptions, and overspread so many provinces of the eastern empire, extinguished in their progress the traces of civilization. And though at certain periods of their history, and in certain countries, they have cultivated a literature of their own, they are now infinitely behind the European world, and possess no spirit of free enquiry, and no mental elasticity, which may lead them to overtake and keep abreast of it.

Mahomed, of the tribe of Koresh, of the family of Hashem, was born at Mecca in Arabia, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, according to the most accurate computation, in the year 569. His father Abdalia, a wealthy and distinguished merchant, was removed by death during his infancy; and his share of the paternal patrimony was reduced to five camels and a single female slave. At the age of twenty-five he entered the service of Cadijah, an opulent widow, on whose behalf he traded to Syria; where he is supposed to have acquired that knowledge of mankind, which proved so useful to him in his future plans. On his

return, he married the widow, and thereby acquired sufficient wealth to raise him above the necessity of labour.

His education had been so neglected that he was unable to read or write; but he remedied these defects by great application. He gradually began to retire from society, and to pass his time in solitude and meditation, and to bestow much of his wealth in charity. At the age of forty he declared that he was the prophet of God, commissioned by him to propagate a new religion. His first disciples were his wife, his servant, and his friend Abdalla. Arabia at that time professed idolatry, and its most renowned shrine consisted of a small square temple called the Caada, which had from time immemorial stood in the city of Mecca. It contained a stone, which, according to popular tradition, descended from heaven in the days of innocence, and was then of a white colour; as mankind degenerated, it became dark; and in the age of Mahomed had become entirely black. The zeal of Mahomed was at first directed against this gross idolatry of his own countrymen.

The religion which he revealed to them and to mankind taught, that there was one God, the eternal and all-powerful Creator of the universe, and that Mahomed was his prophet; that it was the duty of man to pray seven times a-day to his Maker, to honour him with ceremonies, to love mankind, to assist the poor, to protect the innocent, and to shew kindness to strangers. Maho-

med instituted in each year a fast of thirty days he prohibited the use of wine, but allowed each of his disciples four wives and as many concubines as he could maintain; to himself he reserved, as the apostle of God, the privilege of fifteen wives. He taught that God had from time to time sent prophets upon the earth, the most eminent of whom in preceding ages were Abraham, Moses and Jesus Christ; that the last and most distinguished of them was himself. He instructed his disciples that there was another state of existence after death, of rewards for the good, and of punishment for the wicked. He led them to believe that the paradise of good Mahomedans after death would comprise the indulgence of the appetites amidat the most enchanting luxuries; that seventy-two *houris*, or black-eyed damsels of exquisite beauty, would wait on each true believer in heaven, and that this life of sensuality would be indefinitely prolonged. He enjoined the ceremonies of circumcision and ablution, and the virtues of a pilgrimage to Mecca. These with other subordinate injunctions were contained in the Koran, a work written in the purest Arabic style, which Mahomed declared that he had received from heaven, and which he delivered to his followers in successive portions. In the compilation of this work, he evidently availed himself of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; and it is suspected, not without reason, that he was aided in the preparation of it by the learning of others.



The progress of Mahomed's creed was at first but slow. In the course of three years he made only fourteen proselytes; but he continued to preach with unabated ardour, and enforced his doctrine on his fellow citizens with all that natural eloquence of which he was so complete a master. His zeal, and his powers of oratory, aided by a majestic figure and a noble mein, gradually won upon his countrymen to such an extent, as to alarm the rulers of the city. They resolved on putting him to death; but Mahomed having timely notice of their design, fled during the night, in company with his friend Abdalla, from Mecca to Medina, in the year 622, at the age of fifty-three. This flight of the prophet constitutes the memorable era of the *Hegira*. Many of the citizens of Medina had embraced his doctrine, and looked on him as a prophet divinely inspired. When, therefore, sixteen days after his flight from Mecca, he approached this city, five hundred individuals advanced from its gates to welcome him. After his triumphal entry into Medina, he assumed the rank and title of a prince, as well as of a prophet and unsheathed the sword. His views were now enlarged, and his efforts were directed to the establishment of his own power, spiritual and temporal, over Arabia. The year after the *Hegira*, in the vale of Beder, he attacked a caravan of his enemies proceeding to Mecca, and there was the first slaughter made by his followers, who afterwards deluged the world with blood. Mahomed

was victorious, and, his hopes rising with his success, he breathed vengeance against all who resisted his sceptre or his creed. He turned his arms primarily upon the Jews, towards whom he manifested a spirit of more bitter hostility than against even the Christians. His power and his partizans gradually increasing, seven years after his flight from Mecca, he besieged that city and entered it in triumph; the heathenish Caaba became the temple of the new faith, and a pilgrimage to it was declared in the *Moosulman* creed, to be one of the gates of paradise. The subjugation of Mecca by Mahomed fixed the wavering faith of the Arabs upon his religion, and they hastened to acknowledge both the spiritual and temporal authority of the victor.

In this same year, the *Moosulmans* first encountered a foreign foe. Heraclius, the emperor of Constantinople, had just returned in triumph from Persia, when the envoys of the prophet met him, and invited him to embrace the faith of Islam. The answer may be easily divined. The *Moosulmans* instantly invaded the province of Syria, and captured several towns; but the prophet declined any farther prosecution of this warfare. His health was now declining, and in the midst of all his plans of ambition he was cut down by the hand of death, A. D. 632, at the age of sixty-three, according to some by poison, according to others by a fever. In him genius and ambition were united, in a pre-eminent degree, with the spirit of

fanaticism. He achieved the most permanent revolution in human affairs of any mere mortal; he changed the face of the eastern world; and successive dynasties of conquerors continued to bear the impress of his character.

Mahomed appears to have organized no general plan of conquest; but he had already roused the national spirit of the Arabs, and infused into their warm temperament a new principle of religious enthusiasm. Though he left them no legacy of widely extended dominion, he bequeathed to them as an ample equivalent, the pretended commands of God, that they should march through the world, and earn heaven by converting infidels to the true faith through the agency of the sword. His friend Abubeker was elected, after some difficulty, to succeed him as Caliph, or chief of the Faithful. He collected into one volume the scattered fragments of the Koran; and lost no time in following up the scheme of temporal aggrandisement, of which the prophet had laid the foundation. His attention was first directed to the conquest of Syria. Abu Obeidah was appointed to the chief command of the army; but it was mainly to the valour of Caled, surnamed from his ferocity, the 'Sword of God,' that the conquest of that province was to be attributed. After the capture of Bozra, the Moosulmans advanced against Damascus the capital. The war was conducted "in the name of the most merciful God;" the spirit in which it was carried on, may be gathered from the

summons of Caled ; " Ye Christian dogs, you know your option, — the Koran, the tribute, or the sword." The danger of Damascus roused Heraclius, the emperor, from his lethargy ; and seventy thousand troops were sent to repel the invaders. The armies met on the plains of Aiznadin ; the victory declared for the followers of Mahomed, who boasted of having slaughtered thirty thousand of their enemies. The city was closely invested anew, and capitulated after a siege of seventy days. Caled, as he stormed the gate and entered the city sword in hand, cried out, " no quarter, no quarter to the enemies of the Lord ;" but the city was saved by the merciful interposition of the general in chief ; and a numerous body of the defenceless citizens was permitted to depart in search of some place of refuge. These the bloodthirsty Caled pursued and cut to pieces, with the exception of one individual.

In the midst of these conquests Abubeker died, and Omar was elevated to the throne of the prophet. He continued the same course of aggression. Heliopolis and Emessa, cities of Syria, fell into the hands of the Moosulmans. The emperor despatched a second army of 80,000 men by sea and land, as if he designed at once to put a period to the war. The Moosulmans, also called the Saracens, encountered this host with fearlessness, and after the most obstinate conflict in which they had yet been engaged, obtained a complete victory ; and the army of the Greek empire was annihilated.

The next year the Saracens invested the city of Jerusalem for four months, and the Christians at length agreed to yield it up, on condition that the Caliph should come in person to take possession of it; and such were the emotions of exultation which Omar felt at the conquest of the place from whence Christianity was promulgated to the world, that he lost no time in setting out for it from Medina. He entered it in triumph, and ordered a mosque to be built on the spot where the temple of Solomon had stood. Antioch and Aleppo soon after capitulated to the *Moosulmans*, and the whole province of Syria was annexed to their empire; to which it has continued to pertain with the exception of the brief period during the crusades, in which it passed under the dominion of the Christians. Amidst the military glories of the Saracens, we blush to record that Heraclius, the emperor, fled from Syria, and abdicated the throne.

While the conquest of Syria was in progress, another Saracen army broke in upon the empire of Persia. In the year 636, four years after the death of Mahomed, the battle of Cadesia was fought, in which the *Moosulmans* were as usual victorious. The province of Irak, or Assyria, was the first-fruits of this victory; and it was at this time that the victorious Mahomedan general laid the foundation of the city of Bussorah, which afterwards rose to such distinction. Several battles were subsequently fought with great obstinacy; particularly one at Nehavend, where 150,000 Persians were marshal-



led for the final struggle, which was to decide the fate of their national faith and liberty. It was so vigorously contested before the Saracens obtained the day, that they were accustomed to call it the 'victory of victories.' These successive victories decided the fate of Persia. The Mahomedans pursued their victorious career to the shores of the Caspian sea, and then turning west, subdued the provinces of Armenia and Mesopotamia. They continued to advance along the Tigris, and then penetrated the mountains to the valley of Persipolis. Yezdegerd fled before them from province to province, and the Saracens pursued him with unabated ardour. The government of Chorasán, the ancient Bactria, the Caliph offered to the first Mahomedan general who should enter that province; and immediately the standard of the crescent was planted on the walls of Herat and Balk, and the successful general paused not till he reached the banks of the Oxus. The unfortunate monarch of Persia fled beyond the Oxus and the Jaxartes, and at length implored the assistance of the emperor of China, who, alarmed at the progress of the Arabs, was not disinclined to support him. Aided by the resources afforded him by the emperor, he marched down at the head of an army of Turks to reconquer the patrimony of his ancestors; but he was overtaken by the cavalry of his enemies and put to death; and thus closed the dynasty of the Sassanides, and thus fell the ancient creed of Zoroaster A. D. 651. The empire of Persia which had sustained for

many centuries an equal and sometimes an advantageous conquest with the empire of Rome, passed under the yoke of the Mahomedans ; and those fertile provinces, from the Euphrates to the Indus, the seat of the earliest empires in the world, were incorporated with the dominions, and embraced the faith of the *Moosulmans*.

Six years after the death of Mahomed, during the Caliphat of Omar, the *Moosulmans* invaded Egypt under the command of Amroo. He marched at the head of 4,000 troops from Gaza in Palestine, to Pelusum, the key of Egypt, which he took after a siege of thirty days, and thereby opened his way into the heart of the country ; where, however, his progress was arrested by the ancient and magnificent city of Memphis, the seat of royalty in preceding ages. Notwithstanding the decay to which it had fallen, it stood a siege of seven months before surrendering. On the spot where the Mahomedan camp was pitched, gradually arose the city of Cairo, that is, ' the city of victory.' The inhabitants of Egypt, who professed a different form of Christianity from the emperors of Constantinople, had been alienated from them by religious persecution, and now submitted willingly to the victorious Saracen, with the understanding that they should enjoy the free exercise of their religion, on the payment of a definite tribute. From Memphis, Omar proceeded down the Nile to Alexandria. The siege of this city was the most arduous or protracted

of any in which the Mahomedans had hitherto been engaged. It was then the first emporium in the world, and being open to the sea, received supplies from abroad, which the Mahomedans, who had no fleet, were unable to prevent. After a siege of fourteen months, and the loss of twenty-three thousand of the besiegers, it was taken, and the banner of the crescent waved over the capital of Egypt. Some idea of the amazing increase of the Moosulman faith may be formed from the fact, that within sixteen years after its first propagation, so large a number of its soldiers fell in the siege of a single city, at a time when numerous armies were also engaged in the conquest of Syria and Persia. Some notion of the magnitude of Alexandria may be gathered from the vapouring of Amroo, the conqueror. In his dispatches to the Caliph, he says "I have taken the great city of the west; I cannot enumerate its richness or its beauty; it contains 4,000 palaces, 4,000 baths, 400 theatres, or places of amusement, 12,000 shops, and 40,000 tributary Jews." Alexandria was the granary which supplied Constantinople, as it had formerly supplied Rome, with food. The loss of these supplies was so deeply felt, that one expedition after another was equipped to recover it; and in the short space of four years it was twice taken by the Greek troops, and twice re-taken by the Mahomedans, in whose possession it finally remained. Alexandria contained at that time the largest library in

the world ; in it were accumulated all the scientific, literary and theological treasures which had been contributed by the learned through a succession of ages. While every thing in the city was falling a prey to the rapacity of the conquerors, the literary companion of Amroo, in the hope of rescuing this noble collection from destruction, humbly begged that the library might be given to him. Amroo referred the matter to the Caliph who replied in the style of a barbarous Arab, that if the books coincided with the Koran, they were useless, and ought to be destroyed, as the Koran contained all that it was necessary for men to know ; that if they differed from the Koran, they were pernicious, and ought not to be suffered to exist. Amroo accordingly ordered the library to be destroyed ; and for this purpose distributed the books among the baths to be used as fuel for heating them ; and such was their incredible number, that it was six months before the whole library was consumed. This event, which has stamped the Mahomedan character with perpetual infamy, happened in 639.

The Caliph Omar perished by the hands of an assassin in the year 644, and Othman, the secretary of Mahomed, was raised to the throne of the prophet. The onward progress of the Moosulmans was continued during his reign, though he himself was too much enfeebled by age to take an active share in affairs. In 647 the Moosulmans attempted the conquest of Africa, that is, of its nor-

thern coast, which stretches from Egypt to the Atlantic. Forty thousand Saracens marched from Egypt to the siege of Tripoli, where a battle was fought in which they were as usual victorious ; but they lost so many of their best troops, both in the battle, and subsequently by the plague, that the farther conquest of Africa was for the present suspended. Othman, who reigned ten years, gradually lost the confidence of the faithful ; and they at length rose in arms against him, and besieged him in Medina for six weeks, at the end of which time, he was slain with the Koran in his lap.

Ali, the cousin of Mahomed, the husband of his beloved and only daughter and child Fatima, was then raised, A. D. 655, to the throne ; which by right he ought to have obtained twenty years before, on the death of the prophet. But Ayesha, the widow of Mahomed, his perpetual and inveterate foe, proceeded in her hostility so far as to raise an army in order to dethrone him. Ali was victorious, and condemned her to a perpetual residence at the tomb of the prophet. A more formidable foe, however, soon appeared against him in the field. Moawiyah, the son of Abu Soffan, who had been the earliest and most bitter enemy of Mahomed, but who subsequently embraced his creed, now claimed to be his successor, and determined to support his claim by force of arms ; for the Moosulmans had already learned to turn their arms against each other, though a quarter of a century had scarcely elapsed since the establish-



ment of their faith. Various sanguinary conflicts ensued, which were protracted for a hundred and ten days, and in which seventy thousand *Moosulmans* perished on both sides. Ali was obliged to submit to a humiliating truce, and to retreat to Cufi, while his successful rival wrested from him the provinces of Persia, Yemen and Egypt. Five years after Ali had ascended the throne of the Caliphs, he was put to death by an assassin in the mosque of Cufi. Moawiyah, now become all powerful, persuaded Hassan, the son of Ali, to renounce his claims to the throne, which he immediately ascended and founded the dynasty of the Ommiades, A. D. 661. Thus the persecutors of Mahomed usurped the inheritance of his children. Hossein, the younger brother of Hassan continued to serve in the armies of the Caliph against the Christians; but at the end of twenty years he was led to his ruin, by a persuasion wickedly instilled into his mind, that a large portion of the *Moosulmans* were ready to assist him in recovering his paternal right. While he was proceeding to join this supposed body of troops, with only a few horse and foot, he was overtaken and surrounded by the emissaries of Moawiyah, his followers fighting with the fury of lions, were cut down to a man, and the grandson of Mahomed himself fell, covered with thirty-three wounds from the lances and spears of his pursuers. The tragic death of Hossein is commemorated to this day in various parts of the world by those who

maintain an adherence to the family of Ali. The Moosulmans thus became divided into two parties, the friends and the enemies of Ali, the former are called *Shiites*, and comprises the Mahomedans of Persia. While they acknowledge Mahomed as the Apostle, they maintain that Ali was the Vicar of God, and they execrate the memory of the first three Caliphs, Abubeker, Omar and Othman, who in their opinion usurped the throne which belonged of right to Ali. The opposite sect is that of the *Sonnites*, among whom the whole nation of the Turks is included. These were esteemed the most orthodox by the majority of Mahomedans. They were not deficient in respect for Ali, but considering that the succession to the Caliphate was regulated by the degrees of sanctity possessed by each Caliph, they assigned to Ali the lowest rank. The descendants of Ali and Mahomed, though thus excluded from the throne of their ancestors, have enjoyed through all ages, the peculiar veneration of the Mahomedans. In Arabia, they are called Scheriffs; in Syria and Turkey, Emirs; in Africa, Persia and India, Seids. In the lapse of two or three centuries the posterity of Abbas, the uncle of Mahomed, had multiplied to the number of thirty-three thousand; the race of Ali was, as may be supposed, equally prolific; of these individuals, the meanest was esteemed above the greatest of princes, the highest was supposed to be equal in perfection to the angels.

The family of Moawiyah, which now assumed

the regal and sacerdotal office, reigned for ninety years, from 661 to 750, and removed the seat of government to Damascus. The tide of conquest which has in some measure abated during the reigns of Othman and Ali, now rose again and rolled on with impetuosity. Africa and Spain were added to their empire. But before we enter upon the conquests of the Arabs along the coast of Africa and the subjugation of Spain, it is advisable to record the two memorable sieges of Constantinople. As soon as the Caliph Moawiyah had firmly established himself in the throne, he determined to besiege the capital of the east, and to extinguish the Grecian empire. In the year 668, a powerful fleet sailed through the Hellespont, and laid siege to Constantinople; but the Saracens on the one hand had not yet acquired sufficient science to capture a well defended city; on the other hand, the Greeks, though under the government of the weakest of their emperors, were animated with their ancient spirit of valour, and determined to defend with their lives, the last citadel of their liberties and faith. But even their valour and desperation would scarcely have sufficed to repel the attacks which the Saracens continued to make during six years if the Greeks had not been possessed of the maritime or Greek fire, as it was called. It was said to have been invented by Callinicus, a native of Syria; though the vulgar believed that the mystery of this defensive weapon was revealed to the first Constantine by an angel,

who strictly enjoined that it should not be revealed to any foreign nation. It is supposed to have been composed of naphtha, sulphur and pitch. The mode of preparing it was ranked among the most important of state secrets ; and our conjecture of its ingredients may therefore be erroneous. From this mixture which, when ignited, produced a thick smoke and a loud explosion, proceeded a powerful flame, which only acquired additional energy from the action of water. It was either poured from the ramparts in boilers, on the assailants, or discharged among their ranks in red hot balls, or deposited in fire-ships which were dispersed among the fleet of the enemy, and set them in a general blaze. This formidable weapon was now employed to repel the Saracens and most effectually answered its object. Unable to discover its composition, or to resist its effects, they found all their efforts decisively baffled. As they reluctantly withdrew from the siege, their minds seemed to be subdued by shame, and for the first time the lofty spirit of the Saracens bowed before their enemies, and they consented to pay an annual tribute to the Greek empire, A. D. 677.

While the Caliph Walid, one of the least enterprising of the race of the Ommiades, reposed in indolence at Damascus, and his generals were employed in reducing Spain and Transoxiana, another of his armies overspread the province of Asia Minor, A. D. 716, and proceeded a second

time to the siege of Constantinople. The Mahomedan general advanced with a hundred and twenty thousand men, chiefly mounted on horses and camels, to the straits which separate Europe from Asia, and crossing over, laid close siege to the capital. A fleet consisting of eighteen hundred ships large and small, at the same time sailed up the Bosphorus, and anchored off the port. Suddenly the fire ships filled with the tremendous Greek fire, which had been equipped and concealed in the barbour, launched forth, and mingling with the vessels of the enemy, so completely destroyed them, that in a few hours no vestige of this mighty armament remained. The besieging army also began to feel the effects of famine and disease; the barbarians from the Danube were drawn by large promises to defend the capital; and the Mahomedan general after a siege of thirteen months was obliged to raise it and retire.

We have somewhat anticipated the progress of events that we might comprise within one view the two sieges of Constantinople. We now proceed with the conquest of Africa and Spain.

In the year 665, Akbah, the general of the Caliph, marched with ten thousand men to attempt anew the subjugation of Africa. He speedily stripped the Greek emperor of all his dominions in that region, and marching through the desert in which the cities of Morocco and Fez afterwards arose, was stopped in his career only by the Atlantic ocean. Spurring his horse into the waves,



and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, 'Great God! if my course were not stopped by this sea, I would still go on to the unknown kingdoms of the west, preaching the unity of thy holy name, and putting to the sword the rebellious nations who worship any other God but thee.' America was then undiscovered; but had Columbus lived eight centuries earlier, the fanatic Akbah would probably have embarked for America, and spread the doctrines of Islamism throughout that immense continent. The final conquest of Africa by the Mahomedans was not accomplished much before the year 709. Christianity was entirely rooted out of the land. Five hundred churches had been previously overturned by the fury of the Donatists, the Vandals and the Moors. The spirit of the Gospel had long been lost amidst these contentions; and now the outward profession of it was extinguished. The province which had furnished so many able defenders of Christian truth in Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustian and others, which at one time contained the two metropolitan sees of Alexandria and Carthage, was overspread with the doctrines of Mahomed; and within fifty years after its final conquest, the lieutenant of the Caliph reported to him that the tribute imposed on the infidels was abolished by their conversion. Of the unhappy Natives many hundred thousand were sold for slaves; the rest were gradually mingled with the families of the strangers, whose language as well as creed they adopted; and insensibly the

whole region from the banks of the Euphrates to the shores of the Atlantic became one nation, with new institutions and laws, a new religion and language.

The Saracens had now reached the narrow straits of Gibraltar which separate Europe from Africa. Before them to the north lay the Gothic kingdom of Spain, governed by Roderick, whose implacable foe, Count Julien, was seeking by all means fair or nefarious to subvert his throne. In a moment of folly he invited the Saracens to invade Spain, and thus entailed on his native land the calamities of seven centuries. The Goths, during a long interval of peace, had lost that lofty and ardent spirit, which formerly made them the terror of Rome, and which had led them victoriously from the banks of the Danube to the shores of the Atlantic; the walls of the cities were mouldered into dust; the youth had abandoned the exercise of arms; and the country offered an easy conquest to the ambitious Moosulmans, then in the meridian of their career. Musa, the general of the Caliph in Africa, joyfully embraced the invitation of Julien; and in the month of July 710, the first band of Saracens landed in Spain. This expedition was intended chiefly to reconnoitre the country, and to ascertain the prospects of success, which, from the report made, appeared to be flattering. The next year, another descent was made with five thousand men under the command of Tarik; whose name is immortalized by the far-

famed rock called after him Gibraltar, (Gebel-ul-Tarik,) the spot on which he first set foot. His progress was rapid, and served to convince Roderick of his danger. The Gothic monarch summoned the dukes, counts, bishops and nobles of the monarchy to join him with all their followers; and a hundred thousand men advanced under the Gothic banner to Xerxes near Cadiz, where a succession of obstinate engagements was fought, which in the fourth day terminated in the complete defeat of the Goths. The battle of Xerxes decided the fate of the kingdom; and a country which had resisted the Romans in the zenith of their power for two hundred years, yielded to the Saracens in a single campaign. Roderick, the king, flying from the field of battle, was drowned in the Guadalquivir. Tarik lost no time in improving his victory. He marched through the country with speed and impetuosity, before the Goths could recover from their panic; town after town surrendered to him, and before the close of the campaign he had marched seven hundred miles from Gibraltar to the bay of Biscay.

Musa, envious of the unexampled success of his lieutenant, passed over in haste into Spain at the head of 18,000 men, determined to appropriate to himself the laurels which had been won by another. The towns and provinces which had not yet submitted to the Mahomedans, he subdued; and as he entered Toledo, deprived Tarik of his command in a full council of war, on the pretence

that he had disobeyed orders. Tarik, who was adored by his soldiers, might easily have excited them to redress this injustice, but he preferred the safer course of laying his wrongs before the Caliph, who immediately ordered that he should be reinstated in his command. Tarik, again at the head of an army, pushed his conquests more rapidly than ever, and Musa not to be outdone by him, exerted himself with increased energy, for the entire subjugation of Spain. His ardour increased with his success, and though then far advanced in years, he proposed "to follow the course of the Danube, from its source to the Euxine sea; to overthrow the Greek or Roman empire of Constantinople; and returning from Europe to Asia, to unite his new acquisitions with Antioch and the provinces of Syria." But while he was indulging in these magnificent projects, a messenger from the Caliph seized the reins of his horse, in the presence of all his troops, and commanded him to repair instantly to Damascus—an order which he dared not despise. Tarik was at the same time recalled, that the Caliph might hear from their own lips the cause of their mutual dissensions. The progress of Musa resembled rather a triumph than the journey of a suspended officer. Four hundred of the flower of the Gothic nobility, and of the noblest and most beautiful female captives followed in his train, which was swelled by the numerous carriages which bore the prodigious wealth he had amassed.

When Musa reached Syria, Walid was on his deathbed and Solyman his brother and heir, anxious to secure these treasures for himself, commanded him to delay his entry into Damascus. Musa imprudently disregarded this order, and presented himself before Walid, who having heard the tale of both generals, convicted Musa of injustice. The Caliph soon after expired, and Solyman prepared to wreak his vengeance on the disobedient general. He was thrown into prison, beaten with rods, stripped of his wealth and to crown his misery, was presented with the head of his valarous son, whom the dastardly Solyman had caused to be assassinated in Spain.

During the forty years which succeeded the recall of Musa and Tarik, the Mahomedan possessions in Spain were governed by the viceroys of the Caliphs. The few Christians who refused to submit to the Moosulman yoke, fled to the inaccessible fastnesses of the Asturias, and formed the germ of a Christian kingdom, the rise and progress of which belong to the succeeding period of history. In the year 732 Abderaham was appointed to the government of Spain, and formed the great design of invading Gaul, and carrying his victorious arms to the shores of the Baltic. Preparations were made for this expedition on a large scale; troops were levied in Africa; and from all parts of the Caliph's dominions warriors flocked to the standard of Abderaham, to share in the approaching struggle for the conquest of Christendom.



The rapid conquest of Spain by the ferocious Saracens had filled Europe with alarm; the mighty preparations now in progress for the subjugation of the other Christian kingdoms, became a source of still more intense anxiety both to prince and people, who looked with dismay at the approach of these ministers of destruction. Abderaham opened the campaign by the total defeat of Eudes, duke of Aquitaine; and with an armament, the like of which had not been seen since the days of Alarie, he marched through southern and central France, spreading desolation in his progress. Nothing was heard on all sides, but the shrieks of violated females and the groans of the dying; the most flourishing towns were reduced to ashes. Meanwhile Charles Martel, nominally the mayor of the palace, but really the sovereign of France, having determined, if possible, to save Christendom, collected the means of resistance in Belgium and Germany, and when his plans were mature, boldly advanced towards the enemy, who were drawn up in a plain between Tours and Poitiers. After six days of skirmishing, both armies advanced to the shock, which was long and bloody. The soldiers on both sides performed prodigies of valour; the generals rivalled each other in the skill of their movements; but in the end, 'the impenetrable ranks, robust frames, and iron hands' of the Germans, turned the fortune of the day. An incredible number of Saracens were left dead on the field of battle. The general Abderaham

was among the slain. Under cover of the night, the Mahomedans precipitately left their tents, abandoned all their plunder, and fled. This celebrated victory, won by the valour and conduct of Charles Martel, saved Christendom from the yoke of the Mahomedans, and dispelled whatever hopes they had cherished of adding Europe to their dominions.

We have thus traced the History of the Mahomedans to the period when they had reached the zenith of their power. The reader will have perceived that within one century after Mahomed declared himself the prophet of God, his successors, the Caliphs, had become the most powerful monarchs in the Globe, and governed an empire which rivalled in extent that of Rome. "The language and the laws of the Koran were studied with equal devotion at Samarcand and Seville, the Moor and the Indian embraced as brothers in the pilgrimage at Mecca; and the Arabian language was adopted as the popular idiom in all the provinces to the westward of the Tigris." The farther growth of this mighty empire was effectually checked by the battle of Poitiers. Perhaps however this irruption into France ought to be considered as the last wave of that inundation which had threatened desolation to the world. The spirit of temporal and spiritual conquest which Mahomed had breathed into his followers, after blazing with great fury for more than a century, now began to abate. The empire was too large, and composed of materials

too discordant to continue long united under a single ruler; dissension of the fiercest character broke out among the chiefs; and within a few years Spain and Egypt were both severed from the dominions of the Caliph. The Ommiades were also hurled from their throne; and a new dynasty obtained the ascendancy, under whom a taste for luxury was substituted for the military ardour which had raised the Mahomedan empire to such a pitch of greatness. The continued safety of the Christian states in Europe was secured perhaps as much by these internal dissension of the *Moosulmans*, as by their own courage.

The family of Ommiyah had never been popular, except among the Syrians; and the wishes of the faithful were now turned to the kindred of Mahomed. The Fatimites, or descendants of Fatima, were weak and pusillanimous; but the Abbassides, the descendants of Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, had long been preparing to support their pretensions to the throne. The Ommiades chose white as the colour of their party; the Abbassides bore a black standard. With the quarrel of the white and black factions the whole of the *Moosulman* world was distracted, from the Atlantic to the Indus. On the banks of the Zab, their armies met; that of the Ommiades consisting of a hundred and twenty thousand men; that of their foes, of only a sixth of that number. The Caliph, Mervan, the last of the Ommiades, was irretrievably defeated, and eventually lost his life. Abdalla

now ascended the throne, and established the dynasty of the Abbassides, A. D. 750. They abandoned the capital, Damascus, and on the eastern banks of the Tigris erected the city of Bagdad, which they made the metropolis of their dominions. There they laid aside the simplicity and frugality of the first Caliphs, accumulated treasures which sound in our ears incredible, and emulating the splendour of Persian monarchs, erected the most sumptuous palaces, and adorned their court with all the magnificence of the east. But that which gives them a claim to the gratitude of posterity is the ardour with which they began to cultivate letters. The treasures of Grecian literature and science were collected from various quarters, and translated into the Arabic language; schools were opened; and a spirit of intellectual enquiry, encouraged by royal munificence, gave a new and more benignant character to the Mahomedans. At a time when Christian Europe was sunk in barbarism and ignorance, learning found refuge and encouragement in the courts of the Caliphs. About half a century after the establishment of the dynasty of the Abbassides, the celebrated Harun ul Raschid succeeded to the throne. He was the most powerful and vigorous monarch of his race, the friend and ally of Charlemagne, the liberal protector of science and literature, and, we may add, the hero with whose name Europeans are made familiar from their childhood in the Arabian tales.

The Abbassides having dethroned the Ommiades pursued them with relentless fury, and extirpated the whole race, with the exception of one youth, Abderahman, who sought safety in flight, and after escaping a hundred dangers landed in Spain in the early part of the year 755. He was received with acclamations by the people, and in the short space of a single year triumphed over all his enemies, and founded the independent kingdom of the Ommiades of Spain.

## SECT. 5.

*History of Italy from the days of Narses—The Lombard Kingdom—Its Extent—Alboin—His Misfortunes—Misfortunes of his Successors—Lieutprand—Disputes regarding the breaking of Images—Charles Martel succours the Pope—Pepin dethrones the King of France—Founds the second or Carolingian Dynasty—Crosses the Alps—Defeats the Lombards—Bestows the Exarchate on the See of Rome—Charlemagne succeeds to the Empire.*

Having traced the history of the Mahomedans from their origin, to the period when their spirit of temporal and spiritual conquest as a sect had burned down to the socket, and they began to cultivate the arts of peace and to indulge in the enervating pleasure of luxury, we resume the history of Italy, from the time when Narses, the ex-arch, invited the Lombards, or Longbeards, to establish themselves in it. Alboin, who was the



founder of this dynasty, came down upon Italy in the year 568, and established the capital of his new kingdom of Lombardy at Pavia, where his successors reigned for two centuries. They were never masters of the whole of Italy; and their authority did not extend farther south than Rome. The territory around Ravenna continued obedient to the Greek emperor, and to his viceroy, the exarch; Rome, nominally subjected to the exarch, was virtually under the control of its bishop; the territories comprised within the present kingdom of Naples were under the sceptre of a prince, who, though a Lombard by descent, was in fact independent of the kings of Lombardy. Their authority was not complete even in the north of Italy, where the Venetians, who were then laying the foundation of their empire, maintained a species of independence.

Few dynasties have been more unfortunate than that of the Lombards. Alboin had not been seated on his new throne more than four years, before he was assassinated through the revenge of his wife, whom, during a debauch, he had compelled to drink wine out of the skull of her father, which Alboin, after putting him to death, had shaped into the form of a bowl. Of his twenty successors, by far the greater number perished by violence; and the entire period of their sovereignty was disturbed both by intestine broils, and by the hostility of the Greeks and the Franks. Authaire, the third in succession from Alboin, was the first of

the Lombard kings to embrace Christianity. He and his people made a profession of Arianism, but were in general so tolerant of other sects, as in many cities to permit the existence of two Bishops, the one Catholic, the other Arian. During seventy years after their irruption into Italy, the Lombards were without any written laws. Rothaire, the eighth in succession from Alboin, summoned a diet of his nobles at Pavia, and collected the established usages into a code, to which his successors made several additions. At length, in the year 712, Lieutprand ascended the throne of Lombardy. He possessed many great and excellent qualities, but they were counterbalanced by inordinate ambition. Not satisfied with the ample domains of his ancestors, he endeavoured to make himself master of all Italy, and an opportunity was soon afforded him for making the effort.

Those who have studied the religion of the Bible, must perceive that nothing can be more contrary to the spirit of Christianity than the worship of images; but this practice had gradually grown up among the Christian nations both of the west and the east, and was encouraged by all the dignitaries of the Church. Leo, the emperor of Constantinople, on his accession to the throne A. D. 718, determined to root out a practice so repugnant to every Christian feeling, and commanded all images to be removed out of the churches throughout his dominions. The people were incensed at the destruction of the favorite objects of

their adoration, and in many places raised great disturbances. The Bishop of Rome, the Pope, declared himself the steady friend of image worship, and turned every stone to thwart the plans of Leo, surnamed the image-breaker ; and rather than that the people should be deprived of their idols, encouraged them to revolt against their lawful sovereign. His language to that prince breathes a spirit of insufferable insolence. He sent letters to the various cities of Italy, exhorting them to stand firm in the defence of the holy images. When therefore the orders for their destruction arrived from Constantinople, the populace at Ravenna rose in tumult ; and the authority of the emperor's viceroy was annihilated in the city. Lieutprand deemed this a fit opportunity for extending his authority over Italy, and laid siege to Ravenna, which was at length carried by storm ; and the other cities, alarmed at the fate of the capital, surrendered without resistance. Ravenna was however subsequently reconquered by the Greeks. Lieutprand then proceeded to Rome, and summoned it to surrender, and the Pope sent to Charles Martel, the hero who had just delivered Christendom from the Mahomedans, to intreat that he would take the holy see under his protection. Charles was too deeply engaged in his own affairs to be able to divert his attention to those of Italy ; but he received the Pope's messengers with courtesy, and sent a threatening message to Lieutprand, which had the desired effect. Lieut-

prand was succeeded by Rachi, who toward the close of his reign betook himself to a monastery, leaving the throne to Astolpho, who laid siege anew to Ravenna, took it, and extinguished the line of the exarchs. He then summoned Rome to surrender; and the Pope, Stephen, seeing no other mode of relief, crossed the Alps, and in person solicited Pepin the son and successor of Charles to relieve the city from the presence of the Lombards.

The reader must now retrace in his memory the battle of Poitiers, gained by Charles Martel, and the expulsion of the Moosulmans from Gaul. Charles was mayor of the palace to the king of France, Chilperic the II., that is to say, he was the powerful vizier of a weak sovereign. On his death in 741, he bequeathed the kingdom to his two sons, Carloman and Pepin, and a small domain to his bastard; thus parcelling out the provinces of France, as if he had been the real sovereign of the country. Both princes continued to tread in the footsteps of their father, and humbled the Swabians, the Bavarians and the Saxons. In 752 Carloman, weary of the cares of royalty, and anxious to pass the remainder of his days in religious repose, resigned his power to his sons and retired to a monastery, where he took the vows, and eventually ended his days. Pepin, who was determined to have no competitor, forced his nephews into a cloister and seized their inheritance. The time now appeared to him ripe for



placing the diadem on his own brow. The Bishop of Rome was at this period considered the highest spiritual authority in Europe ; and was held in the deepest veneration by the uncivilized nations who had occupied the various provinces of the Roman empire. To him Pepin applied to know whether he might assume the royal sceptre. Zachary, the pope, was flattered with an appeal, which appeared immeasurably to exalt his power, and to imply his authority to dispose of crowns, and to change dynasties. He was also anxious to secure a powerful friend who might protect Rome from the encroachments of the Lombards. He decided according to the wishes of Pepin, and pronounced that the nation might lawfully unite the title and authority of king in the same person. The insignificant Childeric, the last of a long line of vicious kings, was shaven and quietly lodged in a cloister, where he ended his days, and Pepin was proclaimed king of the French. Thus ended the Merovingian, and thus began the second or Carolingian dynasty, A. D. 751. From this date the kings of France have been designated the eldest sons of the Church. Pepin laid aside the heathen ceremony of coronation, which consisted in being raised on a buckler by his soldiers, and adopted from scripture the Jewish mode of consecration by holy oil, which was poured on his head by Boniface, the bishop of Metz, the apostle of Germany, though by birth an Englishman. From that day the sovereigns of Europe have also adopted the



ceremony of holy unction at their coronation; and from this event may be dated the arrogant assumption by the popes of Rome, of the power to dispose of the kingdoms of the earth as the Vicars of Christ.

It was a year or two after the Pope of Rome had conferred this benefit on Pepin, that Stephen the Pope crossed the Alps, and appeared before him in person to implore aid against the Lombards. Pepin received him with great distinction, and concluded a treaty with him, by which he engaged to make over to the holy see, the whole of the Exarchate, when he should have conquered it. After having been again anointed, with holy unction by the Pope, he crossed the Alps and fell upon the Lombards. Astolphus their king sued for peace, and agreed to give up the province of the Exarchate which had been wrested from the Greek emperors; and the keys of the cities were sent by Pepin, and deposited upon the tomb of St. Peter at Rome. This rich domain, consisting of Ravenna, Bologna and Ferrara, was made over in supreme and absolute dominion to the Bishops of Rome; and thus for the first time did the world behold a Christian bishop invested with sovereign power, and wielding in one hand a pastoral crook, in the other, a temporal sword. This territory was henceforth called the Patrimony of St. Peter, and has been enjoyed from that time to the present, with little increase or diminution, by those who call themselves the Vicars of Christ, notwith-

standing his declaration that his kingdom was not of this world. The reign of Pepin was not inferior in glory to that of his father Charles Martel. He subdued his enemies in every direction, and enlarged his kingdom; but at his death, which happened in 768, he divided it among his two sons Charles and Carloman. Carloman died three years after, and Charles disregarding the rights of his nephews, seized upon their patrimony, and became sole king of the Franks, A. D. 772. This brings us to the memorable age of Charles the Great, usually known as CHARLEMAGNE, the greatest and wisest monarch of the middle ages.

#### SECT. 6.

*Literary and Ecclesiastical Notices from the fifth to the eighth century—State of Literature in the West—In the East—Progress of Christianity among the Barbarians—In Ireland; France; England and Saxony—Spirit of Persecution—Ceremonies—Pomp of Christian worship—The true Cross—The Sacrament of the Eucharist—Purgatory—Confession of Sin—St. Eligius's summary of Christian Doctrine—Saints—Councils—The seven Ecumenical Councils—Origin, progress and reform of Monachism—The Clergy and Laity—Progress of the See of Rome towards power.*

We have reserved for a separate section, the literary and ecclesiastical notices of the four centuries of intellectual gloom, which intervened between

the separation of the two empires and the age of Charlemagne. The decay of genuine literary taste may be traced indeed from the time of the Antonines ; but in the age of Constantine it became still more apparent, and from that period ignorance and barbarism advanced with hasty strides. This is attributed to two causes ; the increase of superstition, and the irruption of the northern nations. Superstition spread its baneful shadow over the land, and men began to think that God might be propitiated by the torture they inflicted on themselves, to venerate the bones and relics of saints, and to proceed on idle pilgrimages. An age of prodigies, relics, and pilgrimages, was little adapted to the progress of the human mind ; and we consequently find that, under this debasing influence, knowledge gradually decreased.—The northern nations who broke in upon the provinces of the Roman Empire were unlettered savages ; and although after their settlement they found it necessary to adopt the civilized practice of collecting their public ordinances into a code, yet for several centuries following their irruption they continued in a semi-barbarous state. Theodoric, the most illustrious sovereign among these tribes, was unable even to read and write. In the convulsions which followed their inroads, the literature which had been cultivated by the Romans was swept away ; and it was only among the clergy that any vestige of the ancient learning continued to exist ; and even their writings, con-

finer chiefly to books of Martyrs and the lives of the Saints, betrayed a childishness of thought and expression, which formed a strange contrast with the vigorous conceptions of the preceding ages. Such was the state of literature in the West.

In the Eastern empire, the Greek language, the language of genius and taste, continued still to be spoken and written ; but no new writers arose who could bear any comparisons with those who had rendered this language immortal by their productions. In the year 398 a canon of the Council of Carthage, forbade the study of secular books by Bishops ; and though this edict may not have produced any serious effects, it was a clear index of the spirit of the age. The only works which continued to be in demand were treatises on controversial divinity, alike destitute of importance and taste ; so that the state of learning in the East though not so deplorable as in the Western Provinces, was at a low and miserable ebb. One circumstance connected with literature requires more particular mention. In the age of Justinian, some remnants of the ancient philosophy of Greece lingered at Athens ; a few degenerate philosophers still gave lectures in the almost solitary schools. Amidst the general spread of Christianity they had lost their importance ; but as the heathen sophists had been for four centuries the most bitter opponents of Christianity, Justinian caused the schools to be closed, and exiled the seven philosophers. This event was without any conse-

quences, for the heathen philosophy had long before sunk irretrievably into the dust;—yet the final extinction of that school of learning, which had been rendered illustrious by the names of Socrates and Plato, of Aristotle and Zeno, after a thousand years of glory, demands the attention of the reader even of so brief a view of History as the present.

We now proceed to notice the extension of Christianity among the barbarous nations. We have already stated that the Goths were the first among the barbarians who embraced Christianity, through the preaching of Ulphilas. The other tribes of savages as they successively settled in the Roman provinces, the Burgundians in Gaul, the Suevi in Spain, the Vandals of Africa, and the Ostrogoths of Pannonia, embraced the Christian faith, though they felt little or none of its vital spirit. It is worthy of remark that all these barbarous nations, originally adopted the Arian creed, but exchanged it for the Catholic doctrine before the age of Charlemagne. In the year 432, Succathus, a native of Scotland, subsequently renowned as St. Patrick, arrived in Ireland, and applied himself with such diligence and success to the conversion of the pagan inhabitants, as to have been justly deemed the Apostle of the Irish; and though within a few years after this event Christianity suffered almost a total eclipse in England by the inroad of the Saxons, it was never subverted in Ireland. A niece of the king of



Burgundy, having, in 493, married the king of the Franks, then newly established in Gaul, was instrumental in bringing him and his subjects over to the profession of Christianity. The Franks were the only tribe of the northern nations who originally embraced the Catholic doctrine. A daughter of the King of the Franks, about a century after, having married the Saxon king of Kent in England, who was a heathen, inclined him to receive the doctrines of Christianity preached, as we have already related, by St. Augustin. Little as our Saxon ancestors imbibed of the genuine spirit of the gospel, they evinced an anxiety to impart it to their heathen neighbours of Germany, which was felt by no other Christian people in Europe. Christianity was not carried beyond the Rhine among the yet heathen tribes of Germany much before the seventh century ; and its propagation there was owing almost exclusively to the zeal of English Missionaries. The first foreign missionary who embarked from the shores of England was St. Wilfred, who passed over to the continent, and at the risk of his life preached the gospel among the Frisians, a Germanic tribe. He was followed by a succession of bold and zealous men who counted not their lives dear, that they might secure the conversion of the heathen. At length arose Winfrid of Devonshire, well known among all succeeding ages as the celebrated St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany. He was the greatest ecclesiastic of that age, and may justly

take his station among the most illustrious benefactors of mankind. After thirty years of zealous and unremitting exertion, which was rewarded by the conversion of more than a hundred thousand of the heathen, he fell a sacrifice to his ardor. In his fourth missionary tour among the Frieslanders in 755, he was attacked by a band of fierce pagans, and perished under their weapons, and thus at the advanced age of seventy-five, was he honoured with the crown of martyrdom. Of his assistants, by far the greater number were from his own isle; their names are enshrined in the Calendar of Saints in association with a rabble of canonized but obscure beings, from whose labours mankind derived no benefit. The success of Boniface and his coadjutors was the triumph of Christian truth over heathen error. But a new scene was about to open in the region where they had laboured to disseminate the Gospel, in its own meek spirit. Charlemagne, who was engaged in a bloody conflict with the Saxons, made war equally on their national creed and national liberty. He entered the country in 772, and after a memorable warfare protracted to the year 780, constrained them to receive Christian Baptism; and that they might not relapse into heathenism, parcelled out the country into Bishoprics, and founded schools and established monasteries. Towards the Huns in Pannonia whom he subdued, he pursued the same compulsory measures. It seemed, indeed, as if Charlemagne, in all other respects a wise and po

litic prince, had taken the wild fanaticism of the Saracens as his model in this crusade.

But while Christianity was thus acquiring new converts among barbarous nations, great changes were introduced into the character of the religion itself, by which its genuine spirit was almost extinguished. Foremost among these debasing changes may be placed that persecuting spirit, which grew up with the increase of the Christian Church in power and influence. As soon as the heathen persecution ceased, and the Church became dominant, the Christians retaliated upon the heathen ; and then turned the weapons of persecution upon each other, sect pursuing sect with relentless violence. The emperor, now become Christian, endeavoured to compel all who differed from him to relinquish their opinions by civil punishments. The members of the hierarchy fanned the flame ; and in a very short time, the persecution of heretics came to be reckoned among the obligations of a religion founded in meekness and humility. ' Among the most fatal consequences which have resulted from the union of Church and State is the application of the penalties of the one to the disorders of the other.' The heresies, which sprung up from time to time, and which if left to the weapons of truth, would have passed into oblivion, were swelled into importance by unwise persecution, till the whole of the Christian community presented a scene of strife and discord. The practice of forcing the faith of the stronger on the weaker party, gave

birth in its turn to many subtle distinctions, so that there appeared at length to be no common principles of faith in which all could unite. To the honour of the Gothic nations it deserves to be stated that they pursued a spirit of toleration, which presented a pleasing contrast to that of furious persecution, which prevailed among those who had received Christianity at an earlier period. This baneful spirit was afterwards carried to the highest pitch by the establishment of the Inquisition, of which we shall afterwards treat; and though it has since greatly abated under the influence of civilization, it still breathes in the doctrine that all classes of Christians ought not be placed on a footing of civil equality.

Before the age of Constantine, Christianity had lost much of its original purity; but after his reign the deterioration proceeded forward at a more rapid pace. Instead of the simplicity of worship inculcated in the Scriptures, a great number of foolish and pompous *ceremonies* were introduced into the churches. To conciliate the heathen who had received the name, with little of the spirit, of Christians, many concessions were made to the old superstition. Expiatory processions were framed on the models of heathenism; and to Christian Churches was transferred the sanctity which was supposed to have resided in the temples of the Gods. The utmost splendor was introduced into Christian worship, and the churches blazed with gold and silver and gems. The same ve-



neration for particular places which had marked the heathen superstition, was gradually introduced into the Christian ritual. The bones and relics of martyrs and apostles were sought after with eagerness, and were supposed to give peculiar sanctity to the church in which they were deposited. Then came pilgrimages to the shrines; and men and women left their occupations in crowds, and undertook long and perilous journeys to places of reputed sanctity. To Pope Gregory, though the greatest man of the sixth century, is justly ascribed the consummation of this external pomp, and this veneration for relics. In one of his letters he declared 'that the bodies of the holy martyrs were so resplendent with miracles, that no one could approach them without awe even for the purpose of worshipping them.' Prodiges were supposed to be worked by garments placed in the vicinity of their tombs. Gregory, as the most valuable gift he could bestow on the empress of Constantinople, promised to send her some part of the chains which St. Peter wore on his neck and hands,—if he could succeed in getting any filings from them. It was in this age also that the wood of the true cross came into such demand; that the most barefaced impositions were practised on the credulous, and the quantity of wood said to have formed part of the cross, was found equal to the timber required for building a vessel of the largest size. The *Sacrament of the Eucharist*, which in its original institution was simply a commemora-



tion of the death of Christ, became during this period the object of wild speculation. It gradually came to be considered one of the most awful of mysteries, and the celebration of it was assimilated to the mummeries of paganism. It was during this period also that the doctrine of *Purgatory* came into vogue. It was taught that there was an intermediate state after death, in which souls were purified from their more venial sins by passing through the fire of purgatory. Pope Gregory was also the first who established this among the unquestionable dogmas of the Church. The souls in purgatory were supposed to obtain deliverance through the prayers of the priest, which opened a new source of boundless revenue to the sacred order. From the earliest times, *Confession* of sin had been made openly in the presence of the whole church. But this practice was gradually laid aside, and about the middle of the fifth century, Leo, the Bishop of Rome, enjoined that confession should be made in private confidence to the priest alone; and thus was laid the corner stone of the power of the priesthood. Every layman was obliged to confide the secrets of his heart to his spiritual guide at stated periods; from his lips he received absolution; and this gave the clergy an unbounded influence over a superstitious and timorous laity. —In short, the Christianity which was professed and practised during the four centuries of which we treat, differed as widely as possible from the truth revealed in the Gospel. It may be summed

up in the words of St. Eligius, a prelate of the seventh century, "He is a good Christian who goes frequently to church and makes oblations at God's Altar; who never tastes of his own fruit till he has presented some to God; who can repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Redeem your souls from punishment while you have it in your power; offer your free gifts and tithes; contribute towards the luminaries in the holy places; repair frequently to church, and implore the protection of the saints."

It was an opinion of the third century that the holy martyrs were assessors of Christ and participators in his kingdom, sitting in judgment with him. This doctrine gradually gained strength as error increased. In the fourth and fifth centuries the reverence for martyrs and saints was changed into actual worship; and prayers began to be offered up to them, and offerings to be made at their shrines, and pilgrimages undertaken to their tombs. Out of this doctrine grew at first the use of images, and then the worship of them; a relict of the expiring superstition of Rome. In the days of Gregory, towards the close of the sixth century, the practice had taken firm root, and was not discouraged by that prelate; and by the beginning of the eighth century, the worship of images had overspread the whole of the Christian Church, both Eastern and Western. Leo, the Emperor of Constantinople, as we have already said, made the greatest efforts to root out a practice so re-

pugnant to every principle of the gospel, and succeeded in his own dominions in the East; but his efforts to banish images from his Italian states occasioned many convulsions, and laid the foundation for that schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, which was completed in a succeeding age. The Pope of Rome proclaimed himself the champion of image worship, and met with the most ready support from the superstitious clergy and ignorant laity of Europe; and from that time to the Reformation, the adoration of images continued to form an essential part of the creed of Christendom.

We have already stated, that during the age of Constantine, it became the custom to convene *Councils* consisting of the Bishops and other dignitaries of the Church, to settle disputes regarding doctrine and discipline. Of these Councils seven were deemed Ecumenical or universal, to distinguish them from Provincial Councils which were frequently held in each kingdom, to decide questions of local importance. These seven great councils were held during a period of four hundred and sixty-two years; the first that of Nice, sat in 325; the last also assembled at that place, was held in the year 787. A brief notice of the objects for which they were assembled will serve to shew their character, and to point out the gradual declension of the Christian Church from the simplicity of the truth. The two first were assembled to ascertain the doctrine of the Trinity;

and their decrees were in accordance with the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by the majority of Christians in that and every succeeding age. The third and fourth were engaged in settling the comparatively trivial question of the mode of Christ's existence on earth. The fifth was convened to condemn certain false doctrines of Origin. The sixth Council was occupied with questions similar to those which agitated the third and fourth; the seventh and last established the worship of images as the law of the Catholic Church. All these councils were held in the East, in reference to controversies which had arisen in that quarter, and were attended almost exclusively by Bishops from the East. Hence their decisions are received, with the exception of those of the last, as binding in every respect by the Eastern or Greek Christians, while they are regarded by the Western or Roman Church with veneration, but are not considered a perfect rule of faith and discipline.

One of the most remarkable features in this period was the spread of *Monasticism*, which gave an entirely new aspect to the Christian Church, and exercised no small influence upon public events. Monachism, or the retirement of men from the world, that they might pursue their devotions without interruption, originated in Egypt during the Decian persecution, about half a century before the age of Constantine. For eighty years it was confined chiefly to Syria, Egypt and the East,

the countries in which almost all the heresies which distracted the Church first drew their breath. Athanasius is supposed to have introduced it into the West, during his compulsory visit to Rome A. D. 341. From Rome it spread rapidly through Italy, and diffused itself through Gaul, where it was especially fostered by Martin of Tours. The monks, chose the most savage and solitary spots which they could discover for their retreats; where they erected monasteries, were secluded from all human intercourse, and gave themselves up to severe religious services. They professed poverty, and, for many years after the rage for monkery had spread through Europe, they adhered to this rule, and subsisted, in some places on the charitable offerings of the devout, in others, on their own labour. That it was contrary to the spirit of Christianity for men to desert the duties of social life, even for a religious object, will not be questioned; yet it must be confessed that such was the disastrous condition of Europe in that age, in which all the foundations of society were broken up by the ceaseless inundation of the Roman empire by the barbarians, that the monasteries were not without their use. They perhaps protected Christianity from being overwhelmed by the lawless savages of Germany; they were the means of relieving much individual distress at a period of unexampled misery, and the sacredness of character the monks acquired was employed in the defence of innocence. It was in a subsequent



age, when the monks were gorged with wealth, and trampled on a weak and illiterate laity, that the monasteries became sinks of iniquity.

Two hundred years after the diffusion of the monastic order over Europe, the system received a more regular character and organization from the celebrated St. Benedict of Nursia, who established a Holy Rule, which continued for many ages the standing order of the monasteries. Those who were desirous of embracing a monastic life, were according to his regulation subjected to a long probation before they were allowed to take the vows. If at the end of a year, after having heard the rules repeatedly read to him, the novice persisted in this choice, he was admitted into the order, and took the irrevocable vows of adherence to a monastic life, correctness of morals, and obedience to the superior. Celibacy and poverty were the key stones of the monastic arch; all property belonged to the community, and was at the disposal of the superior and his council: no man who had once taken the vows could hold any right of individual property. Their service and discipline were severe. Two hours after midnight the monks were aroused to prayers. At daybreak another service was performed; seven hours were destined to labour and two to reading, while every interval of time was filled up with repeating the Psalms and in meditation. The monks slept in the same dormitory, and preserved strict silence in their cells. During the day they spoke rarely; all levity

and even cheerfulness was strictly prohibited. Their abbot or chief was chosen by the whole society, and the government of the establishment was entrusted to him ; he was bound to consult his brethren in all matters, but the final decision of every question rested with him.

St. Benedict's establishment was fixed at Monte Cassino in Italy, a place famed as the birth place of those rules which were speedily adopted throughout the Christian world. Within fifty years after its foundation, the monastery was destroyed by the barbarians, and the brethren were dispersed. A relaxation of discipline gradually crept into the order ; and about the year 750, it was found to have so far degenerated, as to require a complete reformation. The individual who was destined to restore the order to its original simplicity and purity was also called Benedict, though of Aniane, where he laid the foundation of a more rigid Benedictine Institution. He practised and enjoined the severest austerities, and became so renowned for sanctity that peasant, noble, and prince flocked to his cell, and the wealthy vied with each other in assisting to build a magnificent convent, and to endow it with large possessions. His fame spread rapidly through Europe, and other monasteries hastened to choose his ascetic disciples to restore their discipline. Though the monastic order was already perhaps too rich for its rigid rule of austerities, yet it must be confessed that the most

industrious, learned and pious men of that dark age, were to be found among its adherents.

The distinction between the *clergy* and *laity* commenced before the establishment of Christianity by Constantine ; but it became more broad and distinct in the succeeding ages of barbarism. The clergy began to claim peculiar immunities and privileges ; together with an exemption from the cognizance of lay tribunals, and a peculiar sanctity of character. These claims were accompanied by the subjection of the lay community to clerical authority, which was greatly promoted among an ignorant and barbarous people by the exclusive possession of literature enjoyed by the clergy. The Germans who inundated the Roman empire, had been accustomed to regard their heathen priest with a peculiar veneration, and they easily transferred it to the Christian priesthood. The bishoprics were endowed by them with large revenues, as the easiest atonement for their violence and the shortest path to heaven ; and the Bishops became in a measure temporal princes. The right of election to bishoprics originally resided with the people ; but when power and wealth were annexed to the sees, the most powerful noble, or the sovereign usurped this right, and placed creatures of his own in them. Thus the mutual connection between the Bishop and his flock was at an end ; and the Bishop himself forsaking the care of those committed to him, was more frequently found at Court than in his dio-

cess, and gave loose to every feeling of avarice and ambition. The episcopal order became universally disorganized, and towards the close of the seventh century reached perhaps the furthest limit of depravity to which it ever proceeded. The Pope of Rome by encouraging appeals from the Bishops against the decision of their metropolitan superiors, destroyed that authority which alone had kept the episcopal order in some kind of check. Closely connected with the Court, controlled only by the distant authority of the Pope, possessed of large domains, there were few excesses in which the Bishop could not indulge with impunity. 'It is therefore without surprise that we find him at one time advancing to battle at the head of his armed attendants, and at another engaged in marauding expeditions.' His habits and manners departed from the ecclesiastical character, and instead of raising to the level of Christian refinement the wild Barons who surrounded him, he sunk into all the degradation of that barbarous age. Hence we discover an edict of the conclave held at Aix-la-Chapelle, in 789, forbidding bishops and abbots to possess dogs or hawks, jugglers or buffoons. The reader may easily imagine into what a state the discipline of the church must have sunk, when the laity were entirely subservient to the clergy; when the clergy, who were now forbidden to marry, formed a separate and overbearing order, and when the bishops, who alone could have corrected the abuses of the church,

were themselves fallen into such a state of degradation.

We have reserved to the last, our notice regarding the gradual increase of the Papal power. The Pope was originally only the Bishop of Rome, possessed of no greater powers than those of any other Bishop. But in the days of Constantine, when the church was taken into alliance with the state, the Bishop of the metropolis began to enjoy a certain indeterminate pre-eminence in the Church, partly through the imperial name of Rome, and partly through the superior wealth and splendour of his see. In the year 440 Leo was elected bishop, and the times appeared favourable for enlarging the authority of the Bishopric. The Patriarch of Constantinople, the bishop of the new metropolis, was his great rival; and the Council of Chalcedon held in 451 had decreed that the see of new Rome should have the same advantages with that of ancient Rome, in the ecclesiastical constitution; but this Patriarch having soon after quarrelled with the Bishops of Alexandria and Antioch, they appealed to the Bishop of Rome; a circumstance which amazingly increased his weight and authority. The power of the Roman bishop was also increased by the absence of the Emperors from Italy, which left him without any one to control him; while the incursions of the northern barbarians rather contributed to advance than to retard his rising authority; for when they perceived the great deference paid by the people to



the Bishop, they naturally treated him as one invested with large authority. All these circumstances were improved by the genius of Leo for the aggrandizement of the see. His successors pursued the same line of aggression. At length Gregory the Great appeared upon the stage in the year 590. After he had been chosen Bishop of Rome, he turned all the energies of his vast and comprehensive genius to the increase of the Papal power. Through the disturbed state of Italy, the political interests of Rome, which had been abandoned by its natural masters, devolved upon this prelate: and from him in fact may be correctly dated the organization of the spiritual dominion of the Popes. The Emperor of Constantinople having conferred the title of Ecumenical or Universal Patriarch on the Bishop of Constantinople, Gregory in 595 addressed five epistles to him, in one of which he says, 'the direction and primacy of the whole Church has been given to St. Peter.' From this it appears that the ground of supremacy claimed by the Bishop of Rome had undergone a great change. Originally it rested on the imperial dignity of the metropolis of the Western world; but when the barbarians had broken up the empire, and Rome had lost its pre-eminence, the Bishop brought forward a new and spiritual claim to power, asserting that he was the successor of St. Peter the Apostle. Thus the name of St. Peter became more dreadful than that of Augustus or Trajan; and his chair, filled

by a succession of ambitious prelates, inspired more awe than ever the sceptre of the Cæsars had done. Gregory was also the first who affirmed that the power of the keys of heaven, which were said to have been given to St. Peter, resided not in the body of Bishops, but in him, as the successor of the Apostle. At the same time he sent his legates into various countries to keep up the authority of the see, and thus accustomed mankind to the spiritual dominion of Rome. He also encouraged appeals on the part of the monasteries to himself, from the decisions of their own diocesans, and created a new interest in those widely spread institutions.

Thus the Roman pontiffs went on to increase by every means in their reach their spiritual authority in Europe, till an opportunity offered for making a more rapid advance towards the objects of their ambition, than any they had yet made. Pepin was anxious to depose Childeric the third, and to ascend the throne of France. The Estates of his realm, when called on for their opinion, declared that the Bishop of Rome should be consulted. A reference was made to Zachary who then filled the Chair, and he decided as the usurper desired. This circumstance gave an unprecedented importance to the Pope of Rome throughout Europe ; and it secured for the Holy See, a powerful friend in the greatest monarch of Christendom, through whose assistance he might safely defy the threats of the Greek emperor. Pepin soon after conquered

the Exarchate, and bestowed it on the Roman see, and thus erected the bishop into a temporal prince. This circumstance, however, though one of the most remarkable in history, did not add much to the real power of the Pope ; which was after this time extended not through his armies, but by his spiritual thunders. Charlemagne, the son of Pepin, confirmed this grant, made large donations to the see, and on his visit to Rome in 800 was formally crowned before the high altar of St. Peter by the Pope ; and invested with the title of Emperor of the West, an event which swelled the pretensions of the see to the most extravagant extent, and led the Popes soon after to claim a superiority over the highest powers on earth. Here we dismiss the subject ; in our next volume, we shall be called to notice the insufferable arrogance with which the Popes treated the kings of Europe, and then to trace the gradual downfall of their spiritual despotism.

END OF PART II.